

THE
WORKS

OF
WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

VOL. XXXVII.

ROMANCES VOL. XXVIII.

ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1823.



Laurence's inv. & sc.

The Bride. Vol. I.

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TALES OF MY LANDLORD,

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

*Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirke to Jonny Groats',
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it,
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it.*

BURNS.

VOL. XII.

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR. P. 1.

ZWICKAU,

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TALES
OF MY LANDLORD

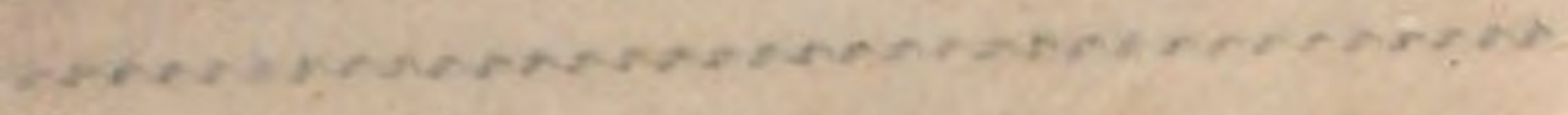
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WICKHAM

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETOR

1831

THE
BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

*By cauk and keel to win your bread,
Wi' whigmaleeries for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed
To carry the gaberlunzie on.*

Old Song.

Few have been in my secret while I was compiling these narratives, nor is it probable that they will ever become public during the life of their author. Even were that event to happen, I am not ambitious of the honoured distinction, *monstrari digito*. I confess, that, were it safe to cherish such dreams at all, I should more enjoy the thought of remaining behind the curtain

unseen, like the ingenious manager of Punch and his wife Joan, and enjoying the astonishment and conjectures of my audience. Then might I, perchance, hear the productions of the obscure Peter Pattieson praised by the judicious, and admired by the feeling, engrossing the young, and attracting even the old; while the critic traced their name up to some name of literary celebrity, and the question when, and by whom, these tales were written, filled up the pause of conversation in a hundred circles and coteries. This I may never enjoy during my lifetime; but farther than this, I am certain, my vanity should never induce me to aspire.

I am too stubborn in habits, and too little polished in manners, to envy or aspire to the honours assigned to my literary contemporaries. I could not think a whit more highly of myself, were I even found worthy to "come in place as a lion," for a winter in the great metropolis. I could not rise, turn round, and shew all my honours, from the shaggy mane to the tufted tail, roar ye as it were any nightingale, and so lie down again like a well-behaved beast of show, and all at the cheap and easy rate of a cup of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter as thin as a wafer. And I could ill stomach the fulsome flattery with which the lady of the evening indulges her show-monsters on such occasions,

as she crams her parrots with sugarplumbs, in order to make them talk before company. I cannot be tempted to « come aloft, » for these marks of distinction, and, like imprisoned Sampson, I would rather remain — if such must be the alternative — all my life in the mill-house, grinding for my very bread, than be brought forth to make sport for the Philistine lords and ladies. This proceeds from no dislike, real or affected, to the aristocracy of these realms. But they have their place, and I have mine; and, like the iron and earthen vessels in the old fable, we can scarce come into collision without my being the sufferer in every sense. It may be otherwise with the sheets which I am now writing. These may be opened and laid aside at pleasure; by amusing themselves with the perusal, the great will excite no false hopes; by neglecting or condemning them, they will inflict no pain; and how seldom can they converse with those whose minds have toiled for their delight, without doing either the one or the other.

In the better and wiser tone of feeling, which Ovid only expresses in one line to retract in that which follows, I can address these quires —

Parve, nec invideo, sine me, liber, ibis in urbe.

Nor do I join the regret of the illustrious exile, that he himself could not in person accompany

the volume, which he sent forth to the mart of literature, pleasure, and luxury. Were there not a hundred similar instances on record, the fate of my poor friend and school-fellow, Dick Tinto, would be sufficient to warn me against seeking happiness, in the celebrity which attaches itself to a successful cultivator of the fine arts.

Dick Tinto, when he wrote himself artist, was wont to derive his origin from the ancient family of Tinto, of that ilk, in Lanarkshire, and occasionally hinted that he had somewhat derogated from his gentle blood, in using the pencil for his principal means of support. But if Dick's pedigree was correct, some of his ancestors must have suffered a more heavy declension, since the good man his father executed the necessary, and, I trust, the honest, but certainly not very distinguished employment, of tailor in ordinary to the village of Langdirdum in the west. Under his humble roof was Richard born, and to his father's humble trade was Richard, greatly contrary to his inclination, early indentured. Old Mr Tinto had, however, no reason to congratulate himself upon having compelled the youthful genius of his son to forsake its natural bent. He fared like the school-boy, who attempts to stop with his finger the spout of a water cistern, while the stream, exasperated at this compression, escapes by a thousand uncalculated spirts, and wets him

all over for his pains. Even so fared the senior Tinto, when his hopeful apprentice not only exhausted all the chalk in making sketches upon the shopboard, but even executed several caricatures of his father's best customers, who began loudly to murmur, that it was too hard to have their persons deformed by the vestments of the father, and to be at the same time turned into ridicule by the pencil of the son. This led to discredit and loss of practice, until the old tailor, yielding to destiny, and to the entreaties of his son, permitted him to attempt his fortune in a line for which he was better qualified.

There was about this time, in the village of Langdirdum, a peripatetic brother of the brush, who exercised his vocation *sub Jove frigido*, the object of admiration to all the boys of the village, but especially to Dick Tinto. The age had not yet adopted, amongst other unworthy retrenchments, that illiberal measure of economy, which, supplying by written characters the lack of symbolical representation, closes one open and easily accessible avenue of instruction and emolument against the students of the fine arts. It was not yet permitted to write upon the plaistered door-way of an alehouse, or the suspended sign of an inn, "The Old Magpie," or "The Saracen's Head," substituting that cold description for the lively effigies of the plumed chatterer,

or the turban'd frown of the terrific soldan. That early and more simple age considered alike the necessities of all ranks, and depicted the symbols of good cheer so as to be obvious to all capacities; well judging, that a man, who could not read a syllable, might nevertheless love a pot of good ale as well as his better educated neighbours, or even as the parson himself. Acting upon this liberal principle, publicans as yet hung forth the painted emblems of their calling, and sign-painters, if they seldom feasted, did not at least absolutely starve.

To a worthy of this decayed profession, as we have already intimated, Dick Tinto became an assistant; and thus, as is not unusual among heaven-born geniuses in this department of the fine arts, began to paint before he had any notion of drawing.

His natural talent for observing nature soon induced him to rectify the errors, and soar above the instructions, of his teacher. He particularly shone in painting horses, that being a favourite sign in the Scottish villages; and, in tracing his progress, it is beautiful to observe, how by degrees he learned to shorten the backs, and prolong the legs, of these noble animals, until they came to look less like crocodiles, and more like nags. Detraction, which always pursues merit with strides proportioned to its

advancement, has indeed alleged, that Dick once upon a time painted a horse with five legs, instead of four. I might have rested his defence upon the licence allowed to that branch of the profession, which, as it permits all sorts of singular and irregular combinations, may be allowed to extend itself so far as to bestow a limb supernumerary on a favourite subject. But the cause of a deceased friend is sacred; and I disdain to bottom it so superficially. I have visited the sign in question, which yet swings exalted in the village of Langdirdum, and I am ready to depone upon oath, that what has been idly mistaken or misrepresented as being the fifth leg of the horse, is, in fact, the tail of that quadruped, and, considered with reference to the posture in which he is represented, forms a circumstance introduced and managed with great and successful, though daring art. The nag being represented in a rampant or rearing posture, the tail, which is prolonged till it touches the ground, appears to form a *point d'appui*, and gives the firmness of a tripod to the figure, without which it would be difficult to conceive, placed as the feet are, how the courser could maintain his ground without tumbling backwards. This bold conception has fortunately fallen into the custody of one by whom it is duly valued; for, when Dick, in his more advanced state of proficiency, became:

dubious of the propriety of so daring a deviation from the established rules of art, and was desirous to execute a picture of the publican himself in exchange for this juvenile production, the courteous offer was declined by his judicious employer, who had observed, it seems, that when his ale failed to do its duty in conciliating his guests, one glance at his sign was sure to put them in good humour.

It would be foreign to my present purpose to trace the steps by which Dick Tinto improved his touch, and corrected, by the rules of art, the luxuriance of a fervid imagination. The scales fell from his eyes on viewing the sketches of a contemporary, the Scottish Teniers, as Wilkie has been deservedly styled. He threw down the brush, took up the crayons, and, amid hunger and toil, and suspense and uncertainty, pursued the path of his profession under better auspices than those of his original master. Still the first rude emanations of his genius (like the nursery rhymes of Pope, could these be recovered,) will be dear to the companions of Dick Tinto's youth. There is a tankard and gridiron painted over the door of an obscure change-house in the Back-wynd of Ganderscleugh — But I feel I must tear myself from the subject, or dwell on it too long.

Amid his wants and struggles, Dick Tinto

had recourse, like his brethren, to levying that tax upon the vanity of mankind which he could not extract from their taste and liberality — in a word, he painted portraits. It was in this more advanced stage of proficiency, when Dick had soared above his original line of business, and highly disdained any allusion to it, that, after having been estranged for several years, we again met in the village of Ganderscleugh, I holding my present situation, and Dick painting copies of the human face divine at a guinea per head. This was a small premium, yet, in the first burst of business, it more than sufficed for all Dick's moderate wants; so that he occupied an apartment at the Wallace Inn, cracked his jest with impunity even upon mine host himself, and lived in respect and observance with the chambermaid, hostler, and waiter.

Those halcyon days were too serene to last long. When his honour the Laird of Ganderscleugh, with his wife and three daughters, the minister, the gauger, mine esteemed patron Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, and some round dozen of the feuars and farmers, had been consigned to immortality by Tinto's brush, custom began to slacken, and it was impossible to wring more than crowns and half-crowns from the hard hands of the peasants, whose ambition led them to Dick's painting-room.

Still, though the horizon was overclouded, no storm for some time ensued. Mine host had Christian faith with a lodger, who had been a good paymaster as long as he had the means. And from a portrait of our landlord himself, grouped with his wife and daughters, in the style of Rubens, which suddenly appeared in the best parlour, it was evident that Dick had found some mode of bartering art for the necessaries of life.

Nothing, however, is more precarious than resources of this nature. It was observed, that Dick became in his turn the whetstone of mine host's wit, without venturing either at defence or retaliation; that his easel was transferred to a garret-room, in which there was scarce space for it to stand upright; and that he no longer ventured to join the weekly club, of which he had been once the life and soul. In short, Dick Tinto's friends feared that he had acted like the animal called the sloth, which, having eaten up the last green leaf upon the tree where it has established itself, ends by tumbling down from the top, and dying of inanition. I ventured to hint this to Dick, recommended his transferring the exercise of his inestimable talent to some other sphere, and forsaking the common which he might be said to have eaten bare.

“There is an obstacle to my change of resi-

dence," said my friend, grasping my hand with a look of solemnity.

"A bill due to my landlord, I am afraid," replied I, with heartfelt sympathy; "if any part of my slender means can assist in this emergency." —

"No, by the soul of Sir Joshua," answered the generous youth, "I will never involve a friend in the consequences of my own misfortune. There is a mode by which I can regain my liberty; and to creep even through a common sewer, is better than to remain in prison."

I did not perfectly understand what my friend meant. The muse of painting appeared to have failed him, and what other goddess he could invoke in his distress, was a mystery to me. We parted, however, without further explanation, and I did not again see him until three days after, when he summoned me to partake of the *foy* with which his landlord proposed to regale him ere his departure for Edinburgh.

I found Dick in high spirits, whistling while he buckled the small knapsack, which contained his colours, brushes, pallets, and clean shirt. That he parted on the best terms with mine host, was obvious from the cold beef set forth in the low parlour, flanked by two mugs of admirable brown stout, and I own my curiosity was excited concerning the means through which

the face of my friend's affairs had been so suddenly improved. I did not suspect Dick of dealing with the devil, and by what earthly means he had extricated himself thus happily, I was at a total loss to conjecture.

He perceived my curiosity, and took me by the hand, « My friend, » he said, « fain would I conceal, even from you, the degradation to which it has been necessary to submit, in order to accomplish an honourable retreat from Ganderscleuch. But what avails attempting to conceal that, which must needs betray itself even by its superior excellence? All the village — all the parish — all the world — will soon discover to what poverty has reduced Richard Tinto. »

A sudden thought here struck me — I had observed that our landlord wore, on that memorable morning, a pair of bran new velveteens, instead of his ancient thicksets.

« What, » said I, drawing my right hand, with the forefinger and thumb pressed together, nimbly from my right haunch to my left shoulder, « you have condescended to resume the paternal arts to which you were first bred — long stitches ha, Dick? »

He repelled this unlucky conjecture with a frown and a pshaw, indicative of indignant contempt, and leading me into another room, shewed me, resting against the wall, the majestic head of

Sir William Wallace, grim as when severed from the trunk by the orders of the felon Edward.

The painting was executed on boards of a substantial thickness, and the top decorated with irons, for suspending the honoured effigy upon a sign-post.

« There, » he said, « my friend, stands the honour of Scotland, and my shame — yet not so — rather the shame of those, who, instead of encouraging art in its proper sphere, reduce it to these unbecoming and unworthy extremities. »

I endeavoured to smooth the ruffled feelings of my misused and indignant friend. I reminded him, that he ought not, like the stag in the fable, to despise the quality which had extricated him from difficulties, in which his talents, as a portrait or landscape painter, had been found unavailing. Above all, I praised the execution, as well as conception, of his painting, and reminded him, that far from feeling dishonoured by so superb a specimen of his talents being exposed to the general view of the public, he ought rather to congratulate himself upon the augmentation of his celebrity, to which its public exhibition must necessarily give rise.

« You are right, my friend — you are right, » replied poor Dick, his eye kindling with enthusiasm; « why should I shun the name of an — an — (he hesitated for a phrase) — an out-of-

doors artist? Hogarth has introduced himself in that character in one of his best engravings — Domenichino, or some body else, in ancient times — Moreland in our own, have exercised their talents in this manner. And wherefore limit to the rich and higher classes alone the delight which the exhibition of works of art is calculated to inspire into all classes? Statues are placed in the open air, why should Painting be more niggardly in displaying her masterpieces than her sister Sculpture? And yet, my friend, we must part suddenly; the men are coming in an hour to put up the — the emblem; — and truly, with all my philosophy, and your consolatory encouragement to boot, I would rather wish to leave Ganderscleugh before that operation commences.”

We partook of our genial host's parting banquet, and I escorted Dick on his walk to Edinburgh. We parted about a mile from the village, just as we heard the distant cheer of the boys which accompanied the mounting of the new symbol of the Wallace-Head. Dick Tinto mended his pace to get out of hearing, — so little had either early practice or recent philosophy reconciled him to the character of a signpainter.

In Edinburgh, Dick's talents were discovered and appreciated, and he received dinners and hints from several distinguished judges of

the fine arts. But these gentlemen dispensed their criticism more willingly than their cash, and Dick thought he needed cash more than criticism. He therefore sought London, the universal mart of talent, and where, as is usual in general marts of most descriptions, much more of the commodity is exposed to sale than can ever find purchasers.

Dick, who, in serious earnest, was supposed to have considerable natural talents for his profession, and whose vain and sanguine disposition never permitted him to doubt for a moment of ultimate success, threw himself headlong into the crowd which jostled and struggled for notice and preferment. He elbowed others, and was elbowed himself; and finally, by dint of intrepidity, fought his way into some notice, painted for the prize at the Institution, had pictures at the exhibition at Somerset-house, and damned the hanging committee. But poor Dick was doomed to lose the field he fought so gallantly. In the fine arts, there is scarce an alternative betwixt distinguished success and absolute failure; and as Dick's zeal and industry were unable to ensure the first, he fell into the distresses which, in his condition, were the natural consequences of the latter alternative. He was for a time patronized by one or two of those judicious persons who make a virtue of being singular,

and of pitching their own opinions against those of the world in matters of taste and criticism. But they soon tired of poor Tinto, and laid him down as a load, upon the principle on which a spoilt child throws away its plaything. Misery, I fear, took him up, and accompanied him to a premature grave, to which he was carried from an obscure lodging in Swallow-street, where he had been dunned by his landlady within doors, and watched by bailiffs without, until death came to his relief. A corner of the Morning Post noticed his death, generously adding, that his manner displayed considerable genius, though his style was rather sketchy; and referred to an advertisement, which announced that Mr Varnish, the well-known print-seller, had still on hand a very few drawings and paintings by Richard Tinto, Esquire, which those of the nobility and gentry, who might wish to complete their collections of modern art, were invited to visit without delay. So ended Dick Tinto, a lamentable proof of the great truth, that in the fine arts mediocrity is not permitted, and that he who cannot ascend to the very top of the ladder will do well not to put his foot upon it at all.

The memory of Tinto is dear to me, from the recollection of the many conversations which we have had together, most of them turning upon my present task. He was delighted with

my progress, and talked of an ornamented and illustrated edition, with heads, vignettes, and *culs de lampe*, all to be designed by his own patriotic and friendly pencil. He prevailed upon an old serjeant of invalids to sit to him in the character of Bothwell, the life-guard'sman of Charles the Second, and the bellmann of Ganderscleugh in that of David Deans. But while he thus proposed to unite his own powers with mine for the illustration of these narratives, he mixed many a dose of salutary criticism with the panegyrics which my composition was at times so fortunate as to call forth, "Your characters," he said, "my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the *gob box*; {they *patter* too much — (an elegant phraseology, which Dick had learned while painting the scenes of an itinerant company of players) — there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue."

"The ancient philosopher," said I in reply, "was wont to say, 'Speak, that I may know thee;' and how is it possible for an author to introduce his *personae dramatis* to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner, than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?"

"It is a false conclusion," said Tinto; "I hate it, Peter, as I hate an unfilled cann. I will grant you, indeed, that speech is a faculty of some

value in the intercourse of human affairs, and I will not even insist on the doctrine of that Pythagorean toper, who was of opinion, that over a bottle speaking spoiled conversation. But I will not allow that a professor of the fine arts has occasion to embody the idea of his scene in language, in order to impress upon the reader its reality and its effect. On the contrary, I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident, accurately drawn, and brought out by appropriate colouring, would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved these everlasting said he's and said she's, with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages. "

I replied, " that he confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen; that the serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets, necessarily appealed to the eye, because it had not the organs for addressing the ear; whereas poetry, or that species of composition which approached to it, lay under the necessity of doing absolutely the reverse, and addressed itself to the ear, for the purpose of exciting that interest which it could not attain through the medium of the eye. "

Dick was not a whit staggered by my argument, which he contended was founded on misrepresentation. « Description, » he said, « was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter; words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene, which he wished to conjure up, as effectually before the mind's eye, as the tablet or canvas presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules, » he contended, « applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and a laborious mode of composition, which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative with that of the drama, a widely different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence; because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and actions of the performers upon the stage. But as nothing, » said Dick, « can be more dull than a long narrative written upon the plan of a drama, so where you have approached most near to that species of composition, by indulging in prolonged scenes of mere conversation, the course of your story has become chill and constrained, and you have lost the power of arresting the attention and exciting the imagination, in which upon other occasions you may be considered as having succeeded tolerably well. »

I made my bow in requital of the compliment, which was probably thrown in by way of *placebo*, and expressed myself willing at least to make one trial of a more straight forward style of composition, in which my actors should do more, and say less, than in my former attempts of this kind. Dick gave me a patronizing and approving nod, and observed, that, finding me so docile, he would communicate, for the benefit of my muse, a subject which he had studied with a view to his own art.

“The story,” he said, “was, by tradition, affirmed to be truth, although, as upwards of a hundred years had passed away since the events took place, some doubts upon all the accuracy of the particulars might be reasonably entertained.”

When Dick Tinto had thus spoken, he rummaged his portfolio for the sketch from which he proposed one day to execute a picture of fourteen feet by eight. The sketch, which was cleverly executed, to use the appropriate phrase, presented an ancient hall, fitted up and furnished in what we now call the taste of Queen Elizabeth’s age. The light, admitted from the upper part of a high casement, fell upon a female figure of exquisite beauty, who, in an attitude of speechless terror, appeared to watch the issue of a debate betwixt two other persons. The one was a young man, in the Vandyke dress common

to the time of Charles I., who, with an air of indignant pride, testified by the manner in which he raised his head and extended his arm, seemed to be urging a claim of right, rather than of favour, to a lady, whose age, and some resemblance in their features, pointed her out as the mother of the younger female, and who appeared to listen with a mixture of displeasure and impatience.

Tinto produced his sketch with an air of mysterious triumph, and gazed on it as a fond parent looks upon a hopeful child, while he anticipates the future figure he is to make in the world, and the height to which he will raise the honour of his family. He held it at arms' length from me, — he held it closer, — he placed it upon the top of a chest of drawers, closed the lower shutters of the casement, to adjust a downward and favourable light, — fell back to the due distance, dragging me after him, — shaded his face with his hand, as if to exclude all but the favourite object, — and ended by spoiling a child's copy-book, which he rolled up so as to serve for the darkened tube of an amateur. I fancy my expressions of enthusiasm had not been in proportion to his own, for he presently exclaimed with vehemence, « Mr Pattieson, I used to think you had an eye in your head. »

I vindicated my claim to the usual allowance of visual organs.

“Yet, on my honour,” said Dick, “I would swear you had been born blind, since you have failed at the first glance to discover the subject and meaning of that sketch. I do not mean to praise my own performance, I leave these arts to others; I am sensible of my deficiencies, conscious that my drawing and colouring may be improved by the time I intend to dedicate to the art. But the conception — the expression — the positions — these tell the story to every one who looks at the sketch; and if I can finish the picture without diminution of the original conception, the name of Tinto shall no more be smothered by the mists of envy and intrigue.”

I replied, “That I admired the sketch exceedingly; but that to understand its full merit, I felt it absolutely necessary to be informed of the subject.”

“That is the very thing I complain of,” answered Tinto; you have accustomed yourself so much to these creeping twilight details of yours, that you are become incapable of receiving that instant and vivid flash of conviction, which darts on the mind from seeing the happy and expressive combinations of a single scene, and which gathers from the position, attitude, and

countenance of the moment, not only the history of the past lives of the personages represented, and the nature of the business on which they are immediately engaged, but lifts even the veil of futurity, and affords a shrewd guess at their future fortunes."

"In that case," replied I, "Painting excels the Ape of the renowned Gines de Passamont, which only meddled with the past and the present; nay, she excels that very Nature who affords her subjects; for I protest to you, Dick, that were I permitted to peep into that Elizabeth-chamber, and see the persons you have sketched conversing in flesh and blood, I should not be a jot nearer guessing the nature of their business, than I am at this moment while looking at your sketch. Only generally, from the languishing look of the young lady, and the care you have taken to present a very handsome leg on the part of the gentleman, I presume there is some reference to a love affair between them."

"Do you really presume to form such a bold conjecture?" said Tinto. "And the indignant earnestness with which you see the man urge his suit — the unresisting and passive despair of the younger female — the stern air of inflexible determination in the elder woman, whose looks express at once consciousness that

she is acting wrong, and a firm determination to persist in the course she has adopted." —

"If her looks express all this, my dear Tinto," replied I, interrupting him, "your pencil rivals the dramatic art of Mr Puff in the Critic, who crammed a whole complicated sentence into the expressive shake of Lord Burleigh's head."

"My good friend Peter," replied Tinto, "I observe you are perfectly incorrigible; however, I have compassion on your dulness, and am unwilling you should be deprived of the pleasure of understanding my picture, and of gaining, at the same time, a subject for your own pen. You must know then, last summer, while I was taking sketches on the coast of East Lothian and Berwickshire, I was seduced into the mountains of Lammermoor by the account I received of some remains of antiquity in that district. Those with which I was most struck, were the ruins of an ancient castle in which that Elizabeth-chamber, as you call it, once existed. I resided for two or three days at a farm-house in the neighbourhood, where the aged goodwife was well acquainted with the history of the castle, and the events which had taken place in it. One of these was of a nature so interesting and singular, that my attention was divided between my wish to draw

the old ruins in landscape, and to represent in a history-piece the singular events which have taken place in it. Here are my notes of the tale," said poor Dick, handing a parcel of loose scraps, partly scratched over with his pencil, partly with his pen, where outlines of caricatures, sketches of turrets, mills, old gables, and dove-cotes, disputed the ground with his written memoranda.

I proceeded, however, to decypher the substance of the manuscript as well as I could, and wove it into the following Tale, in which, following in part, though not entirely, my friend Tinto's advice, I endeavoured to render my narrative rather descriptive than dramatic. My favourite propensity, however, has at times overcome me, and my persons, like many others in this talking world, speak now and then a great deal more than they act.

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CHAPTER II.

*Well, lords, we have not got that which we have;  
'Tis not enough our foes are this time fled,  
Being opposites of such repairing nature.*

*Second Part of Henry VI.*

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IN the gorge of a pass or mountain glen, ascending from the fertile plains of East Lothian, there stood in former times an extensive castle, of which only the ruins are now visible. Its ancient proprietors were a race of powerful and warlike barons, who bore the same name with the castle itself, which was Ravenswood. Their line extended to a remote period of antiquity, and they had intermarried with the Douglasses, Humes, Swintons, Hays, and other families of power and distinction in the same contry. Their history was frequently involved in that of Scotland itself, in whose annals their feats are



recorded. The Castle of Ravenswood, occupying, and in some measure commanding, a pass betwixt Berwickshire or the Merse, as the south-eastern province of Scotland is termed, and the Lothians, was of importance both in times of foreign war and domestic discord. It was frequently besieged with ardour and defended with obstinacy, and of course, its owners played a conspicuous part in story. But their house had its revolutions, like all sublunary things; became greatly declined from its splendour about the middle of the 17th century; and towards the period of the Revolution, the last proprietor of Ravenswood Castle saw himself compelled to part with the ancient family seat, and to remove himself to a lonely and sea-beaten tower, which, situated on the bleak shores between Saint Abb's Head and the village of Eyemouth, looked out on the lonely and boisterous German Ocean. A black domain of wild pasture-land surrounded their new residence, and formed the remains of their property.

Lord Ravenswood, the heir of this ruined family, was far from bending his mind to his new condition of life. In the civil war of 1689, he had espoused the sinking side, and although he had escaped without the forfeiture of life or land, his blood had been attainted,



and his title abolished. He was now called Lord Ravenswood only in courtesy.

This forfeited nobleman inherited the pride and turbulence, though not the fortune of his family, and, as he imputed the final declension of his family to a particular individual, he honoured that person with his full portion of hatred. This was the very man who had now become, by purchase, proprietor of Ravenswood, and the domains of which the heir of the house now stood dispossessed. He was descended of a family much less ancient than that of Lord Ravenswood, and which had only risen to wealth and political importance during the great civil wars. He himself had been bred to the bar, and had held high offices in the state, maintaining through life the character of a skilful fisher in the troubled waters of a state divided by factions, and governed by delegated authority; and of one who contrived to amass considerable sums of money in a country where there was but little to be gathered, and who equally knew the value of wealth, and the various means of augmenting it, and using it as an engine of increasing his power and influence.

Thus qualified and gifted, he was a dangerous antagonist to the fierce and imprudent Ravenswood. Whether he had given him good



cause for the enmity with which the Baron regarded him, was a point on which men spoke differently. Some said the quarrel arose merely from the vindictive spirit and envy of Lord Ravenswood, who could not patiently behold another, though by just and fair purchase, become the proprietor of the estate and castle of his forefathers. But the greater part of the public, prone to slander the wealthy in their absence, as to flatter them in their presence, held a less charitable opinion. They said, that the Lord Keeper, (for to this height Sir William Ashton had ascended,) had, previous to the final purchase of the estate of Ravenswood, been concerned in extensive pecuniary transactions with the former proprietor; and, rather intimating what was probable, than affirming any thing positively they asked which party was likely to have the advantage in stating and enforcing the claims arising out of these complicated affairs, and more than hinted the advantages which the cool lawyer and able politician must necessarily possess over the hot, fiery, and imprudent character, whom he had involved in legal toils and pecuniary snares.

The character of the times aggravated these suspicions. "In those days there was no king in Israel." Since the departure of James VI. to assume the richer and more powerful crown



of England, there had existed in Scotland contending parties, formed among the aristocracy, by whom, as their intrigues at the court of St James's chanced to prevail, the delegated powers of sovereignty were alternately swayed. The evils attending upon this system of government, resembled those which afflict the tenants of an Irish estate owned by an absentee. There was no supreme power, claiming and possessing a general interest with the community at large, to whom the oppressed might appeal from subordinate tyranny, either for justice or for mercy. Let a monarch be as indolent, as selfish, as much disposed to arbitrary power as he will, still, in a free country, his own interests are so clearly connected with those of the public at large; and the evil consequences to his own authority are so obvious and imminent when a different course is pursued, that common policy, as well as common feeling, point to the equal distribution of justice, and to the establishment of the throne in righteousness. Thus, even sovereigns, remarkable for usurpation and tyranny, have been found rigorous in the administration of justice among their subjects, in cases where their own power and passions were not compromised.

It is very different when the powers of sovereignty are delegated to the head of an ari-



stocratic faction, rivalled and pressed closely in the race of ambition by an adverse leader. His brief and precarious enjoyment of power must be employed in rewarding his partizans, in extending his influence, in oppressing and crushing his adversaries. Even Abon Hassan, the most disinterested of all viceroys, forgot not, during his caliphate of one day, to send a douçeur of one thousand pieces of gold to his own household; and the Scottish vicegerents, raised to power by the strength of their faction, failed not to embrace the same means of rewarding them.

The administration of justice, in particular, was infected by the most gross partiality. Scarce a case of importance could occur, in which there was not some ground for bias or partiality on the part of the judges, who were so little able to withstand the temptation, that the adage, "Show me the man, and I will show you the law," became as prevalent as it was scandalous. One corruption led the way to others still more gross and profligate. The judge who lent his sacred authority in one case to support a friend, and in order to crush an enemy, and whose decisions were founded on family connections, or political relations, could not be supposed inaccessible to direct personal motives, and the purse of the wealthy was too



often believed to be thrown into the scale to weigh down the cause of the poorer litigant. The subordinate officers of the law affected little scruple concerning bribery. Pieces of plate, and bags of money, were sent in presents to the king's counsel, to influence their conduct, and poured forth, says a contemporary writer, like billets of wood upon their floors, without even the decency of concealment.

In such times, it was not over uncharitable to suppose, that the statesman, practised in courts of law, and a powerful member of a triumphant cabal, might find and use means of advantage over his less skilful and less favoured adversary; and if it had been supposed that Sir William Ashton's conscience had been too delicate to profit by these advantages, it was believed that his ambition and desire of extending his wealth and consequence, found as strong a stimulus in the exhortations of his lady, as the daring aim of Macbeth in the days of yore.

Lady Ashton was of a family more distinguished than that of her lord, an advantage which she did not fail to use to the uttermost, in maintaining and extending her husband's influence over others, and, unless she was greatly belied, her own over him. She had been beautiful, and was still stately and majestic in her



appearance. Endowed by nature with strong powers and violent passions, experience had taught her to employ the one, and to conceal, if not to moderate, the other. She was a severe and strict observer of the external forms, at least, of devotion; her hospitality was splendid, even to ostentation; her address and manners, agreeable to the pattern most valued in Scotland at the period, were grave, dignified, and severely regulated by the rules of etiquette. Her character had always been beyond the breath of slander. And yet, with all these qualities to excite respect, Lady Ashton was seldom mentioned in the terms of love or affection. Interest, — the interest of her family, if not her own, — seemed too obviously the motive of her actions; and where this is the case, the sharp-judging and malignant public are not easily imposed upon by outward show. It was seen and ascertained, that, in her most graceful courtesies and compliments, Lady Ashton no more lost sight of her object than the falcon in his airy wheel turns his quick eyes from his destined quarry; and hence, something of doubt and suspicion qualified the feelings with which her equals received her attentions. With her inferiors these feelings were mingled with fear, an impression useful to her purposes, so far as it enforced ready compliance with her re-



quests, and implicit obedience to her commands, but detrimental, because it cannot exist with affection or regard.

Even her husband, it is said, upon whose fortunes her talents and address had produced such emphatic influence, regarded her with respectful awe rather than confiding attachment; and report said, there were times when he considered his grandeur as dearly purchased at the expence of domestic thralldom. Of this, however much might be suspected, but little could be accurately known; Lady Ashton regarded the honour of her husband as her own, and was well aware how much that would suffer in the public eye should he appear a vassal to his wife. In all her arguments, his opinion was quoted as infallible; his taste was appealed to, and his sentiments received with the air of deference, which a dutiful wife might seem to owe to a husband of Sir William Ashton's rank and character. But there was something under all this which rung false and hollow; and to those who watched this couple with close, and perhaps malicious scrutiny, it seemed evident, that, in the haughtiness of a former character, higher birth, and more decided views of aggrandizement, the lady looked with some contempt on her husband, and that he regarded her with jealous fear rather than with love or admiration.



Still, however, the leading and favourite interests of Sir William Ashton and his lady were the same, and they failed not to work in concert, although without cordiality, and to testify, in all exterior circumstances, that respect for each other which they were aware was necessary to secure that of the public.

Their union was crowned with several children, of whom three survived. One, the eldest son, was absent on his travels; the second, a girl of seventeen, and the third, a boy about three years younger, resided with their parents in Edinburgh, during the sessions of the Scottish Parliament and Privy-council, at other times in the old Gothic castle of Ravenswood, to which the Lord Keeper had made large additions in the style of the seventeenth century,

Allan Lord Ravenswood, the late proprietor of that ancient mansion and the large estate annexed to it, continued for some time to wage ineffectual war with his successor concerning various points to which their former transactions had given rise, and which were successively determined in favour of the wealthy and powerful competitor, until death closed the litigation, by summoning Ravenswood to a higher bar. The thread of life, which had been long wasting, gave way during a fit of violent and impotent fury, with which he was assailed on receiving the



news of the loss of a cause, founded, perhaps, rather in equity than law, the last which he had maintained against his powerful antagonist. His son witnessed his dying agonies, and heard the curses which he breathed against his adversary, as if they had conveyed to him a legacy of vengeance. Other circumstances happened to exasperate a passion, which was, and had long been, a prevalent vice in the Scottish disposition.

It was a November morning, and the cliffs which overlooked the ocean were hung with thick and heavy mist, when the portals of the ancient half-ruinous tower, in which Lord Ravenswood had spent the last and troubled years of his life, opened, that his mortal remains might pass forward to an abode yet more dreary and lonely. The pomp of attendance, to which the deceased had, in his latter years, been a stranger, was revived as he was about to be consigned to the realms of forgetfulness.

Banner after banner, with the various devices and coats of this ancient family and its connections, followed each other in mournful procession from under the lowbrowed archway of the court-yard. The principal gentry of the country attended in the deepest mourning, and tempered the pace of their long train of horses to the solemn march befitting the occasion.



Trumpets, with banners of crape attached to them, sent forth their long and melancholy notes to regulate the movements of the procession. An immense train of inferior mourners and menials closed the rear, which had not yet issued from the castle-gate, when the van had reached the chapel where the body was to be deposited.

Contrary to the custom, and even to the law of the time, the body was met by a priest of the English communion, arrayed in his surplice and prepared to read over the coffin of the Deceased the funeral service of the church. Such had been the desire of Lord Ravenswood in his last illness, and it was readily complied with by the tory gentlemen, or cavaliers, as they affected to style themselves, in which faction most of his kinsmen were enrolled. The presbyterian church-judiciary of the bounds, considering the ceremony as a bravading insult upon their authority, had applied to the Lord Keeper, as the nearest privy counsellor, for a warrant to prevent its being carried into effect; so that, when the clergyman had opened his prayer-book, an officer of the law, supported by some armed men, commanded him to be silent. An insult, which fired the whole assembly with indignation, was particularly and instantly resented by the only son of the deceased, Edgar, popularly called the Master of Ravenswood, a youth of about twenty years



of age. He clapped his hand on his sword, and, bidding the official person to desist at his peril from further interruption, commanded the clergyman to proceed. The man attempted to enforce his commission, but as an hundred swords at once glittered in the air, he contented himself with protesting against the violence which had been offered to him in the execution of his duty, and stood aloof, a sullen and moody spectator of the ceremonial, muttering as one who should say, "You'll rue the day that clogs me with this answer."

The scene was worthy of an artist's pencil. Under the very arch of the house of death, the clergyman, affrighted at the scene, and trembling for his own safety, hastily and unwillingly rehearsed the solemn service of the church, and spoke dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, over ruined pride and decayed posterity. Around stood the relations of the deceased, their countenances more in anger than in sorrow, and the drawn swords which they brandished forming a violent contrast with their deep mourning habits. In the countenance of the young man alone, resentment seemed for the moment overpowered by the deep agony with which he beheld his nearest, and almost his only friend, consigned to the tomb of his ancestry. A relative observed him turn deadly pale, when all rites



being now duly observed, it became the duty of the chief mourner to lower down into the charnel vault, where mouldering coffins shewed their tattered velvet and decayed plating, the head of the corpse which was to be their partner in corruption. He stepped to the youth and offered his assistance, which, by a mute motion, Edgar Ravenswood rejected. Firmly, and without a tear, he performed that last duty. The stone was laid on the sepulchre, the door of the aisle was locked, and the youth took possession of its massive key.

As the crowd left the chapel, he paused on the steps which led to its Gothic chancel. «Gentlemen and friends,» he said, «you have this day done no common duty to the body of your deceased kinsman. The rites of due observance, which in other countries, are allowed as the due of the meanest Christian, would this day have been denied to the body of your relative — not certainly sprung of the meanest house in Scotland — had it not been assured to him by your courage. Others bury their dead in sorrow and tears, in silence and in reverence; our funeral rites are marred by the intrusion of bailiffs and ruffians, and our grief — the grief due to our departed friend — is chased from our cheeks by the glow of just indignation. But it is well that I know from



what quiver this arrow has come forth. It was only he that dug the grave who could have the mean cruelty to disturb the obsequies; and Heaven do as much to me and more, if I requite not to this man and his house the ruin and disgrace he has brought on me and mine."

A numerous part of the assembly applauded this speech, as the spirited expression of just resentment; but the more cool and judicious regretted that it had been uttered. The fortunes of the heir of Ravenswood were too low to brave the farther hostility which they imagined these open expressions of resentment must necessarily provoke. Their apprehensions, however, proved groundless, at least in the immediate consequences of this affair.

The mourners returned to the tower, there, according to a custom but recently abolished in Scotland, to carouse deep healths to the memory of the deceased, to make the house of sorrow ring with sounds of jovialty and debauch, and to diminish, by the expense of a large and profuse entertainment, the limited revenues of the heir of him whose funeral they thus strangely honoured. It was the custom, however, and on the present occasion it was fully observed. The tables swam in wine, the populace feasted in the court-yard, the yeomen in the kitchen and buttery, and two years'



rent of Ravenswood's remaining property hardly defrayed the charge of the funeral revel. The wine did its office on all but the Master of Ravenswood, a title which he still retained, though forfeiture had attached to that of his father. He, while passing around the cup which he himself did not taste, soon listened to a thousand exclamations against the Lord Keeper, and passionate protestations of attachment to himself, and to the honour of his house. He listened with dark and sullen brow to ebullitions which he considered justly as equally evanescent with the crimson bubbles on the brink of the goblet, or at least with the vapours which its contents excited in the brains of the revellers around him.

When the last flask was emptied, they took their leave, with deep protestations — to be forgotten on the morrow, if, indeed, those who made them should not think it necessary for their safety to make a more solemn retraction.

Accepting their adieus with an air of contempt which he could scarce conceal, Ravenswood at length beheld his ruinous habitation cleared of this confluence of riotous guests, and returned to the deserted hall, which now appeared doubly lonely from the cessation of that clamour to which it had so lately echoed. But

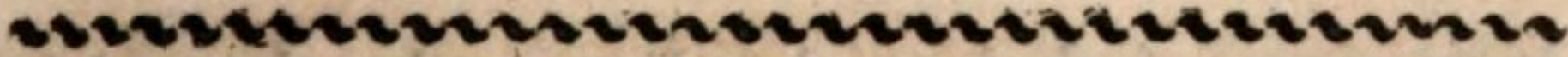


its space was peopled by phantoms, which the imagination of the young heir conjured up before him — the tarnished honour and degraded fortunes of his house, the destruction of his own hopes, and the triumph of that family by whom they had been ruined. To a mind naturally of a gloomy cast, here was ample room for meditation, and the musings of young Ravenswood were deep and unwitnessed.

The peasant, who shows the ruins of the tower, which still crown the beetling cliff and behold the war of the waves, though no more tenanted save by the sea-mew and cormorant, even yet affirms, that on this fatal night the Master of Ravenswood, by the bitter exclamation of his despair, evoked some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven. Alas! what fiend can suggest more desperate counsels, than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?

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### CHAPTER III.

*Over Gods forebode, then, said the King,  
That thou shouldst shoot at me.*

*William Bell. Clim o' the Cleugh, etc.*

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ON the morning after the funeral, the legal officer, whose authority had been found insufficient to effect an interruption of the funeral solemnities of the late Lord Ravenswood, hastened to state before the Keeper the interruption which he had received in the execution of his office.

The statesman was seated in a spacious library, once a banquetting-room in the old Castle of Ravenswood, as was evident from the armorial insignia still displayed on the carved roof, which was vaulted with Spanish chesnut, and on the stained glass of the casement, through which gleamed a dim yet rich light, on the



long rows of shelves, bending under the weight of legal commentators and monkish historians, whose ponderous volumes formed the chief and most valued contents of a Scottish historian of the period. On the massive oaken table and reading-desk, lay a confused mass of letters, petitions, and parchments; to toil amongst which was the pleasure at once and the plague of Sir William Ashton's life. His appearance was grave and even noble, well becoming one who held an high office in the state; and it was not, save after long and intimate conversation with him upon topics of pressing and personal interest, that a stranger could have discovered something vacillating and uncertain in his resolutions; an infirmity of purpose, arising from a cautious and timid disposition, which, as he was conscious of its internal influence on his mind, he was, from pride as well as policy, most anxious to conceal from others.

He listened with great apparent composure to an exaggerated account of the tumult which had taken place at the funeral, of the contempt thrown on his own authority, and that of the church and state; nor did he seem moved even by the faithful report of the insulting and threatening language which had been uttered by young Ravenswood and others, and obviously directed against himself. He heard, also, what



the man had been able to collect, in a very distorted and aggravated shape, of the toasts which had been drunk, and the menaces uttered at the subsequent entertainment. In fine, he made careful notes of all these particulars, and of the names of the persons by whom, in case of need, an accusation, founded upon these violent proceedings, could be witnessed and made good, and dismissed his informer, secure that he was now master of the remaining fortune, and even of the personal liberty, of young Ravenswood.

When the door had closed upon the officer of the law, the Lord Keeper remained for a moment in deep meditation; then, starting from his seat, paced the apartment as one about to take a sudden and energetic resolution. "Young Ravenswood," he muttered, "is now mine — he is my own — he has placed himself in my hand, and he shall bend or break. I have not forgot the determined and dogged obstinacy with which his father fought every point to the last, resisted every effort at compromise, embroiled me in law-suits, and attempted to assail my character when he could not otherwise impugn my rights. This boy he has left behind him — this Edgar — this hotheaded, hare-brained fool, has wrecked his vessel before she has cleared the harbour. I must see that he gains no advantage of some turning



tide which may again float him off. These memoranda, properly stated to the Privy-council, cannot but be construed into an aggravated riot, in which the dignity both of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities stand committed. A heavy fine might be imposed; an order for committing him to Edinburgh or Blackness Castle seems not improper; even a charge of treason might be laid on many of these words and expressions, though God forbid I should prosecute the matter to that extent. No, I will not; — I will not touch his life, even if it should be in my power; — and yet, if he lives till a change of times, what follows? — Restitution — perhaps revenge. I know Athole promised his interest to old Ravenswood, and here is his son already bandying and making a faction by his own contemptible influence. What a ready tool he would be for the use of those who are watching the downfall of our administration? »

While these thoughts were agitating the mind of the wily statesman, and while he was persuading himself that his own interest and safety, as well as those of his friends and party, depended on using the present advantage to the uttermost against young Ravenswood, the Lord Keeper sate down to his desk, and proceeded to draw up, for the information of the Privy-council, an account of the disorderly proceed-



ings which, in contempt of his warrant, had taken place at the funeral of Lord Ravenswood. The names of most of the parties concerned, as well as the fact itself, would, he was well aware, sound odiously in the ears of his colleagues in administration, and most likely instigate them to make an example of young Ravenswood at least, *in terrorem*.

It was a point of delicacy, however, to select such expressions as might infer his culpability, without seeming directly to urge it, which, on the part of Sir William Ashton, his father's ancient antagonist, could not but appear odious and invidious. While he was in the act of composition, labouring to find words which might indicate Edgar Ravenswood to be the cause of the uproar, without directly urging the charge, Sir William, in a pause of his task, chanced, in looking upward, to see the crest of the family (for whose heir he was whetting the arrows, and disposing the toils of the law,) carved upon one of the corbeilles from which the vaulted roof of the apartment sprung. It was a black bull's head, with the legend, "I bide my time;" and the occasion upon which it was adopted mingled itself singularly and impressively with the subject of his present reflections.

It was said by a constant tradition, that a Malisius de Ravenswood had, in the thirteenth



century, been deprived of his castle and lands by a powerful usurper, who had for a while enjoyed his spoils in quiet. At length, on the eve of a costly banquet, Ravenswood, who had watched his opportunity, introduced himself into the castle with a small band of faithful retainers. The serving of the expected feast was impatiently looked for by the guests, and clamorously demanded by the temporary master of the castle. Ravenswood, who had assumed the disguise of a sewer upon the occasion, answered, in a stern voice, "I bide my time;" and at the same moment a bull's head, the ancient symbol of death, was placed upon the table. The explosion of the conspiracy took place upon the signal, and the usurper and his followers were put to death. Perhaps there was something in this still known and often repeated story, which came immediately home to the breast and conscience of the Lord Keeper; for, putting from him the paper on which he had begun his report, and carefully locking the memoranda which he had prepared, into a cabinet which stood beside him, he proceeded to walk abroad, as if for the purpose of collecting his ideas, and reflecting farther on the consequences of the step which he was about to take, ere yet they became unavoidable.

In passing through a large Gothic anteroom,



Sir William Ashton heard the sound of his daughter's lute. Music, when the performers are concealed, affects us with a pleasure mingled with surprise, and reminds us of the natural concert of birds among the leafy bowers. The statesman, though little accustomed to give way to emotions of this natural and simple class, was still a man and a father. He stopped, therefore, and listened, while the silver tones of Lucy Ashton's voice mingled with the accompaniment in an ancient air, to which some one had adapted the following words: —

« Look not thou on beauty's charming, —  
 Sit thou still when kings are arming, —  
 Taste not when the wine-cup glistens, —  
 Speak not when the people listens, —  
 Stop thine ear against the singer, —  
 From the red gold keep thy finger, —  
 Vacant heart, and hand, and eye, —  
 Easy live and quiet die.

The sounds ceased, and the Keeper entered his daughter's apartment.

The words she had chosen seemed particularly adapted to her character; for Lucy Ashton's exquisitely beautiful, yet somewhat girlish features, were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly



pleasure. Her locks, which were of shadowy gold, divided on a brow of exquisite whitenets, like a gleam of broken and pallid sunshine upon a hill of snow. The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid, and feminine, and seemed rather to shrink from the most casual look of a stranger, than to court his admiration. Something there was of a Madonna cast, perhaps the result of delicate health, and of residence in a family, where the dispositions of the inmates were fiercer, more active, and energetic than her own.

Yet her passiveness of disposition was by no means owing to an indifferent or unfeeling mind. Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aërial palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive, but delightful architecture. In her retired chamber, or in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and called after her name, she was in fancy distributing the prizes at the tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants,



or she was wandering in the wilderness with Una, or she was identifying herself with the simple, yet noble-minded Miranda, in the isle of wonder and enchantment.

But in her exterior relations to things of this world, Lucy willingly received the ruling impulse from those around her. The alternative was, in general, too indifferent to her to render resistance desirable, and she willingly found a motive for decision in the opinion of her friends, which perhaps she might have sought for in vain in her own choice. Every reader must have observed in some family of his acquaintance, some individual of a temper soft and yielding, who, mixed with stronger and more ardent minds, is borne along by the will of others, with as little power of opposition as the flower which is flung into a running stream. It usually happens that such a compliant and easy disposition, which resigns itself without murmur to the guidance of others, becomes the darling of those to whose inclinations its own seem to be offered, in ungrudging and ready sacrifice.

This was eminently the case with Lucy Ashton. Her politic, wary, and worldly father, felt for her an affection, the strength of which sometimes surprised him into an unusual emotion. Her elder brother, who trode the path of ambition with a haughtier step than his father, had also



more of human affection. A soldier, and in a dissolute age, he preferred his sister Lucy even to pleasure, and to military preferment and distinction. Her younger brother, at an age when trifles chiefly occupied his mind, made her the confidante of all his pleasures and anxieties, — his success in field-sports, and his quarrels with his tutor and instructors. To these details, however trivial, Lucy lent patient and not indifferent attention. They moved and interested Henry, and that was enough to secure her ear.

Her mother alone did not feel that distinguished and predominating affection, with which the rest of the family cherished Lucy. She regarded what she termed her daughter's want of spirit, as a decided mark, that the more plebeian blood of her father predominated in Lucy's veins, and used to call her in derision her Lammermoor Shepherdess. To dislike so gentle and inoffensive a being was impossible; but Lady Ashton preferred her eldest son, on whom had descended a large portion of her own ambitious and undaunted disposition, to a daughter whose softness of temper seemed allied to feebleness of mind. Her eldest son was the more partially beloved by his mother, because, contrary to the usual custom in Scottish families of distinction, he had been named after the head of the house.

“My Sholto,” she said, “will support the



untarnished honour of his maternal house, and elevate and support that of his father. Poor Lucy is unfit for courts, or crowded halls. Some country laird must be her husband, rich enough to supply her with every comfort, without an effort on her own part, so that she may have nothing to shed a tear for but the tender apprehension lest he may break his neck in a fox-chase. It was not so, however, that our house was raised, nor is it so that it can be fortified and augmented. The Lord Keeper's dignity is yet new; it must be borne as if we were used to its weight, worthy of it, and prompt to assert and maintain it. Before ancient authorities, men bend, from customary and hereditary deference; in our presence, they will stand erect, unless they are compelled to prostrate themselves. A daughter fit for the sheep-fold, or the cloister, is ill qualified to exact respect where it is yielded with reluctance; and since Heaven refused us a third boy, Lucy should have held a character fit to supply his place. The hour will be a happy one which disposes her hand in marriage to some one whose energy is greater than her own, or whose ambition is of as low an order."

So meditated a mother, to whom the qualities of her childrens' hearts, as well as the prospect of their domestic happiness, seemed



light in comparion to their rank and temporal greatness. But, like many a parent of hot and impatient character, she was mistaken in estimating the feelings of her daughter, who, under a semblance of extreme indifference, nourished the germ of those passions which sometimes spring up in one night, like the gourd of the prophet, and astonish the observer by their unexpected ardour and intensity. In fact, Lucy's sentiments seemed chill, because nothing had occurred to interest or awaken them. Her life had hitherto flowed on in an uniform and gentle tenor, and happy for her had not its present smoothness of current resembled that of the stream as it glides downwards to the waterfall!

« So Lucy, » said her father, entering as her song was ended, « does your musical philosopher teach you to condemn the world before you know it? — that is surely something premature. — Or did you but speak according to the fashion of fair maidens, who are always to hold the pleasures of life in contempt till they are pressed upon them by the address of some gentle knight? »

Lucy blushed, disclaimed any inference respecting her own choice being inferred from her selection of a song, and readily laid aside



her instrument at her father's request that she would attend him in his walk.

A large and well wooded park, or rather chase, stretched along the hill behind the castle, which occupying, as we have noticed, a pass ascending from the plain, seemed built in its very gorge to defend the forest ground which arose behind it in shaggy majesty. Into this romantic region the father and daughter proceeded, arm in arm, by a noble avenue overarched by embowering elms; beneath which groups of the fallow-deer were seen to stray in distant perspective. As they paced slowly on, admiring the different points of view, for which Sir William Ashton, notwithstanding the nature of his usual avocations, had considerable taste and feeling, they were overtaken by the forester, or park-keeper, who, intent on sylvan sport, was proceeding with his cross-bow over his arm, and a hound led in leash by his boy, into the interior of the wood.

“Going to shoot us a piece of venison, Norman?” said his master, as he returned the woodman's salutation.

“Saul, your honour, and that I am. Will it please you to see the sport?”

“O no,” said his lordship, after looking at his daughter, whose colour fled at the idea of seeing the deer shot, although, had her father



expressed his wish that they should accompany Norman, it was probable she would not even have hinted her reluctance.

The forester shrugged his shoulders. "It was a disheartening thing," he said, "when none of the gentles came down to see the sport. He hoped Mr Sholto would be soon hame, or he might shut up his shop entirely; for Mr Harry was kept sae slose wi' his Latin nonsense, that, though his will was very gude to be in the wood from morning till night, there would be a hopeful lad lost, and no making a man of him. It was not so, he had heard, in Lord Ravenswood's time — when a buck was to be killed, man and mother's son ran to see; and when the deer fell, the knife was always presented to the knight, and he never gave less than a dollar for the compliment. And there was Edgar Ravenswood — Master of Ravenswood that is now — when he goes up to the wood — there hasna been a better hunter since Tristrem's time — when Sir Edgar hauds out, down goes the deer, faith. But we hae lost a' sense of' wood-craft on this side of the hill."

There was much in this harangue highly displeasing to the Lord Keeper's feeling's; he could not help observing that his menial despised him almost avowedly for not possessing that taste for sport, which in these times was demed



the natural and indispensable attribute of a real gentleman. But the master of the game is, in all country houses, a man of great importance, and entitled to use considerable freedom of speech. Sir William, therefore, only smiled and replied, he had something else to think upon to-day than killing deer; meantime, taking out his purse, he gave the ranger a dollar for his encouragement. The fellow received it as the waiter of a fashionable hotel receives double his proper fee from the hands of a country gentleman, — that is, with a smile, in which pleasure at the gift is mingled with contempt for the ignorance of the donor. “Your honour is the bad paymaster,” who pays before it is done. What would you do were I to miss the buck after you have paid me my wood-fee?”

“I suppose,” said the Keeper, smiling, “you would hardly guess what I mean were I to tell you of a *condictio indebiti*?”

“Not I, on my saul — I guess it is some law phrase — but sue a beggar, and — your honour knows what follows. — Well, but I will be just with you, and if bow and brach fail not, you shall have a piece of game two fingers fat on the brisket.”

As he was about to go off, his master again called him, and asked, as if by accident, whether the Master of Ravenswood was actually so brave



a man and so good a shooter as the world spoke him?

“ Brave! — brave enough, I warrant you,” answered Norman; “ I was in the wood at Tynninghame, when there was a sort of gallants hunting with my lord; on my saul, there was a buck turned to bay made us all stand back; a stout old Trojan of the first-head, ten-tynd branches, and a brow as broad as e’er a bullock’s. Egad, he dashed at the old lord, and there would have been inlake among the peerage, if the Master had not whipt roundly in, and hamstrung him with his cutlace. He was but sixteen then, bless his heart! ”

“ And is he as ready with the gun as with the conteau? ” said Sir William.

“ He’ll strike this silver dollar out from between my finger and thumb at fourscore yards, and I’ll hold it out for a gold merk; what more would ye have of eye, hand, lead, and gunpowder? ”

“ O no more to be wished, certainly, ” said the Lord Keeper; “ but we keep you from your sport, Norman. Good morrow, good Norman. ”

And humming his rustic roundelay, the yeoman went on his road, the sound of his rough voice gradually dying away as the distance betwixt them increased.



The monk must arise when the matins ring,  
 The abbot may sleep to their chime;  
 But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing,  
 'Tis time, my hearts, 'tis time.

There's bucks and raes on Bilhope braes,  
 There's a herd in Shortwood Shaw;  
 But a lily white doe in the garden goes,  
 She's fairly worth them a'.

"Has this fellow," said the Lord Keeper, when the yeoman's song had died on the wind, "ever served the Ravenswood people, that he seems so much interested in them? I suppose you know, Lucy, for you make it a point of conscience to record the special history of every boor about the castle."

"In am not quite so faithful a chronicler, my dear father; but I believe that Norman once served here while a boy, and before he went to Ledington, whence you hired him. But if you want to know any thing of the former family, Old Alice is the best authority."

"And what should I have to do with them, pray, Lucy," said her father, "or with their history or accomplishments?"

"Nay, I do not know, sir; only that you were asking questions at Norman about young Ravenswood."



«Pshaw, child!» — replied her father, yet immediately added, «And who is old Alice? I think you know all the old women in the country.»

«To be sure I do, or how could I help the old creatures when they are in hard times? And as to old Alice, she is the very empress of old women, and queen of gossips, so far as legendary lore is concerned. She is blind, poor old soul, but when she speaks to you, you would think she has some way of looking into your very heart. I am sure I often cover my face, or turn it away, for it seems as if she saw one change colour, though she has been blind these twenty years. She is worth visiting, were it but to say you have seen a blind and paralytic old woman have so much acuteness of preception, and dignity of manners. I assure you, she might be a countess from her language and behaviour. — Come, you must go to Alice; we are not a quarter of a mile from her cottage.»

«All this, my dear,» said the Lord Keeper, «is no answer to my question, who this woman is, and what is her connection with the former proprietor's family?»

«O, it was something of a nourice-ship I believe; and she remained here, because her two grandsons were engaged in your service. But it was against her will, I fancy; for the poor old



creature is always regretting the change of times and of property."

"I am much obliged to her," answered the Lord Keeper. "She and her folks eat my bread and drink my cup, and are lamenting all the while that they are not still under a family which never could do good, either to themselves or any one else."

"Indeed," replied Lucy, "I am certain you do old Alice injustice. She has nothing mercenary about her, and would not accept a penny in charity, if it were to save her from being starved. She is only talkative, like all old folks, when you put them upon stories of their youth; and she speaks about the Ravenswood people, because she lived under them so many years. But I am sure she is grateful to you, sir, for your protection, and that she would rather speak to you, than to any other person in the whole world beside. Do, sir, come and see old Alice."

And with the freedom of an indulged daughter, she dragged the Lord Keeper in the direction she desired.

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CHAPTER IV.

*Through tops of the high trees she did descry
A little smoke, whose vapour, thin and light,
Reeking aloft, uprolled to the sky,
Which cheerful sign did send unto her sight,
That in the same did worne some living wight.*

SPENSER.

LUCY acted as her father's guide, for he was too much engrossed with his political labours, or with society, to be perfectly acquainted with his own extensive domains, and, moreover, was generally an inhabitant of the city of Edinburgh; and she, on the other hand, had, with her mother, resided the whole summer in Ravenswood, and, partly from taste, partly from want of any other amusement, had, by her frequent rambles, learned to know each lane, alley, dingle, or bushy dell,

“And every bosky bourn from side to side.”

We have said, that the Lord Keeper was not indifferent to the beauties of nature, and we must add, in justice to him, that he felt them doubly, when pointed out by the beautiful, simple, and interesting girl, who, hanging on his arm with filial kindness, now called him to admire the size of some ancient oak, and now the unexpected turn, where the path developing its maze from glen or dingle, suddenly reached an eminence commanding an extensive view of the plains beneath them, and then gradually glided away from the prospect to lose itself among rocks and thickets, and guide to scenes of deeper seclusion.

It was when pausing on one of those points of extensive and commanding view, that Lucy told her father they were close by the cottage of her blind protégée; and on turning from the little hill, a path which led around it, worn by the daily steps of the infirm inmate, brought them in sight of the hut, which, embosomed in a deep and obscure dell, seemed to have been so situated purposely to bear a correspondence with the darkened state of its inhabitant.

The cottage was situated immediately under a tall rock, which in some measure beetled over it, as if threatening to drop some detached fragment from its brow on the frail tenement beneath. The hut itself was constructed of turf and stones, and rudely roofed over with thatch, much of which

was in a dilapidated condition. The thin blue smoke rose from it in a light column, and curled upward along the white face of the incumbent rock, giving the scene a tint of exquisite softness. In a small and rude garden, surrounded by straggling elder bushes, which formed a sort of imperfect hedge, sat near to the bee-hives, by the produce of which she lived, that "woman old," whom Lucy had brought her father hither to visit.

Whatever there had been which was disastrous in her fortune — whatever there was miserable in her dwelling, it was easy to judge, by the first glance, that neither years, poverty, misfortune, nor infirmity, had broken the spirit of this remarkable woman.

She occupied a turf-seat, placed under a weeping birch of unusual magnitude and age, as Judah is represented sitting under her palm-tree, with an air at once of majesty and of dejection. Her figure was tall, commanding, and but little bent by the infirmities of old age. Her dress, though that of a peasant, was remarkably clean, forming in that particular a strong contrast to those of her rank, and was disposed with an attention to neatness, and even to taste, equally unusual. But it was her expression of countenance which chiefly struck the spectator, and induced most persons to address her with a degree of deference and ci-

vility very inconsistent with the miserable state of her dwelling; and which, nevertheless, she received with that easy composure which showed she felt it to be her due. She had once been beautiful, but her beauty had been of a bold and masculine cast, such as does not survive the bloom of youth; yet her features continued to express strong sense, deep reflection, and a character of sober pride, which, as we have already said of her dress, appeared to argue a conscious superiority to those of her own rank. It scarce seemed possible that a face, deprived of the advantage of sight, could have expressed character so strongly; but her eyes, which were almost totally closed, did not, by the display of their sightless orbs, mar the countenance to which they could add nothing. She seemed in a ruminating posture, soothed, perhaps, by the murmurs of the busy tribe around her, to abstraction, though not to slumber.

Lucy undid the latch of the little garden gate, and solicited the old woman's attention. "My father, Alice, is come to see you."

"He is welcome, Miss Ashton, and so are you," said the old woman, turning and inclining her head towards her visitors.

"This is a fine morning for your beehives, mother," said the Lord Keeper, who, struck with the outward appearance of Alice, was so-

newhat curious to know if her conversation would correspond with it.

«I believe so, my lord,” she replied; «I feel the air breathe milder than of late.”

«You do not,” resumed the statesman, «take charge of these bees yourself, mother? — How do you manage them?”

«By delegates, as kings do their subjects,” resumed Alice, «and I am fortunate in a prime minister — Here, Babie.”

She whistled on a small silver call which hung around her neck, and which at that time was sometimes used to summon domestics, and Babie, a girl of fifteen, made her appearance from the hut, not altogether so cleanly arrayed as she would probably have been had Alice had the use of her eyes, but with a greater air of neatness than was upon the whole to have been expected.

«Babie,” said her mistress, «offer some bread and honey to the Lord Keeper and Miss Ashton — they will excuse your awkwardness, if you use cleanliness and despatch.”

Babie performed her mistress’s command with the grace which was naturally to have been expected, moving to and again in a lobster-like gesture, her feet and legs tending one way, while her head, turned in a different direction, was fixed in wonder upon the laird, who was more frequently heard of than seen by his tenants and

dependents. The bread and honey, however, deposited on a plantain leaf, was offered and accepted in all due courtesy. The Lord Keeper, still keeping the place which he had occupied on the decayed trunk of a fallen tree, looked as if he wished to prolong the interview, but was at a loss how to introduce a suitable subject.

“You have been long a resident on this property?” he said, after a pause.

“It is now nearly sixty years since I first knew Ravenswood,” answered the old dame, whose conversation, though perfectly civil and respectful, seemed cautiously limited to the unavoidable and necessary task of replying to Sir William.

“You are not, I should judge by your accent, of this country originally?” said Sir William in continuation.

“No; I am by birth an Englishwoman.”

“Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own.”

“It is here,” replied the blind woman, “that I have drank the cup of joy and of sorrow which Heaven destined for me — I was here the wife of an upright and affectionate husband for more than twenty years — I was here the mother of six promising children — it was here that God deprived me of all these blessings — it was here they died, and yonder, by yon ruined chapel, they lie all buried — I had no country but theirs while

they lived — I have none but theirs now they are no more.”

“But your house,” said the Lord Keeper, looking at it, “is miserably ruinous?”

“Do, my dear father,” said Lucy, eagerly, yet bashfully, catching at the hint, “give orders to make it better, — that is, if you think it proper.”

“It will last my time, my dear Miss Lucy,” said the blind woman; “I would not have my lord give himself the least trouble about it.”

“But,” said Lucy, “you once had a much better house, and were rich, and now in your old age to live in this hovel!”

“It is as good as I deserve, Miss Lucy; if my heart has not broke with what I have suffered, and seen others suffer, it must have been strong enough, and the rest of this old frame has no right to call itself weaker.”

“You have probably witnessed many changes,” said the Lord Keeper; “but your experience must have taught you to expect them.”

“It has taught me to endure them, my lord,” was the reply.

“Yet you knew that they must needs arrive in the course of years?” said the statesman.

“Ay; as I know that the stump, on or beside which you sit, once a tall and lofty tree, must needs one day fall by decay, or by the axe; yet

I hoped my eyes might not witness the downfall of the tree which overshadowed my dwelling."

"Do not suppose," said the Lord Keeper, "that you will lose any interest with me, for looking back with regret to the days when another family possessed my estates. You had reason, doubtless, to love them, and I respect your gratitude. I will order some repairs in your cottage, and I hope we shall live to be friends when we know each other better."

"Those of my age," returned the dame, "make no new friends. I thank you for your bounty—it is well intended undoubtedly; but I have all I want, and I cannot accept more at your lordship's hands."

"Well then," continued the Lord Keeper, "at least allow me to say, that I look upon you as a woman of sense and education beyond your appearance, and that I hope you will continue to reside on this property of mine rent-free for your life."

"I hope I shall," said the old dame, composedly; "I believe that was made an article in the sale of Ravenswood to your lordship, though such a trifling circumstance may have escaped your recollection."

"I remember—I recollect," said his lordship, somewhat confused. "I perceive you are too

much attached to your old friends to accept any benefit from their successor."

"Far from it, my lord; I am grateful for the benefits which I decline, and I wish I could pay you for offering them better than what I am now about to say." The Lord Keeper looked at her in some surprise, but said not a word. "My lord," she continued, in an impressive and solemn tone, "take care what you do; you are on the brink of a precipice."

"Indeed?" said the Lord Keeper, his mind reverting to the political circumstances, of the country; "Has any thing come to your knowledge — any plot or conspiracy?"

"No, my lord; those who traffic in such commodities do not call into their councils the old, blind, and infirm. My warning is of another kind. You have driven matters hard with the house of Ravenswood. Believe a true tale — they are a fierce house, and there is danger in dealing with men when they become desperate."

"Tush," answered the Keeper, "what has been between us has been the work of the law, not my doing; and to the law they must look, if they would impugn my proceedings."

"Ay, but they may think otherwise, and take the law into their own hand, when they fail of other means of redress."

"What mean you?" said the Lord Keeper.

«Young Ravenswood would not have recourse to personal violence?»

«God forbid I should say so; I know nothing of the youth but what is honourable and open — honourable and open, said I? — I should have added, free, generous, noble. But he is still a Ravenswood, and may bide his time. Remember the fate of Sir George Lockhart.» *)

*) President of the Court of Session. He was pistolled in the High Street of Edinburgh, by John Chiesley, of Dalry, in the year 1689. The revenge of this desperate man was stimulated by an opinion that he had sustained injustice in a decret-arbitral pronounced by the President, assigning an alimentary provision of about 93l. in favour of his wife and children. He is said at first to have designed to shoot the judge while attending upon divine worship, but was diverted by some feeling concerning the sanctity of the place. After the congregation was dismissed, he dogged his victim as far as the head of the close on the south side of the Lawnmarket, in which the President's house was situated, and shot him dead as he was about to enter it. This act was done in the presence of numerous spectators. The assassin made no at-

The Lord Keeper started as she called to his recollection a tragedy so deep and so recent. The old woman proceeded, "Chiesley, who did the deed, was a relative of Lord Ravenswood. In the hall of Ravenswood, in my presence, and in that of others, he avowed publicly his determination to do the cruelty which he afterwards committed. I could not keep silence, though to speak it ill became my station. 'You are devising a dreadful crime,' I said, 'for which you must

tempt to fly, but boasted of the deed, saying, 'I have taught the President how to do justice.' He had at least given him fair warning, as Jack Cade says on a similar occasion. The murderer, after undergoing the torture, by a special act of the estates of Parliament, was tried before the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, as high sheriff, and condemned to be dragged on a hurdle to the place of execution, to have his right hand struck off while he yet lived, and finally, to be hung on the gallows with the pistol wherewith he shot the President tied round his neck. This execution took place on the 3d April, 1689; and the incident was long remembered as a dreadful instance of what the law books call the *perfervidum genium Scotorum*.

reckon before the judgment-seat.' Never shall I forget his look, as he replied, 'I must reckon then for many things, and will reckon for this also.' Therefore I may well say beware of pressing a desperate man with the hand of authority. There is blood of Chiesley in the veins of Ravenswood, and one drop of it were enough to fire him in the circumstances in which he is placed—I say beware of him."

The old dame had, either intentionally or by accident, harped aright the fear of the Lord Keeper. The desperate and dark resource of private assassination, so familiar to a Scottish baron in former times, had even in the present age been too frequently resorted to under the pressure of unusual temptation, or where the mind of the actor was prepared for such a crime. Sir William Ashton was aware of this; as also that young Ravenswood had received injuries sufficient to prompt him to that sort of revenge, which becomes a frequent though fearful consequence of the partial administration of justice. He endeavoured to disguise from Alice the nature of the apprehensions which he entertained, but so ineffectually, that a person even of less penetration than nature had endowed her with must necessarily have been aware that the subject lay near his bosom. His voice was changed in its accent as he replied to her, that the Master of Ravenswood was a man

of honour; and, were it otherwise, that the fate of Chiesley of Dalry was a sufficient warning to any one who should dare to assume the office of avenger of his own imaginary wrongs. And having hastily uttered those expressions, he rose and left the place without waiting for a reply.

CHAPTER V.

— *Is she a Capulet?*

O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Lord Keeper walked for nearly a quarter of a mile in profound silence. His daughter, naturally timid and bred up in those ideas of filial awe and implicit obedience which were inculcated upon the youth of that period, did not venture to interrupt his meditations.

“Why do you look so pale, Lucy?” said her father, turning suddenly round and breaking silence.

According to the ideas of the time, which did not permit a young woman to offer her sentiments on any subject of importance unless especially required to do so, Lucy was bound to appear ignorant of the meaning of all that passed betwixt Alice and her father, and imputed the emotion

he had observed to the fear of the wild cattle which grazed in that part of the extensive chase through which they were now walking.

Of these animals, the descendants of the savage herds which anciently roamed free in the Caledonian forests, it was formerly a point of state to preserve a few in the parks of the Scottish nobility. Specimens continued within the memory of man to be kept at least at three houses of distinction, Hamilton namely, Drumlanrick, and Cumbernauld. They had degenerated from the ancient race in size and strength, if we are to judge from the accounts of old chronicles, and from the formidable remains frequently discovered in bogs and morasses when drained and laid open. The bull had lost the shaggy honours of his mane, and the race was small and light made, in colour a dingy white, or rather a pale yellow, with black horns and hoofs. They retained, however, in some measure, the ferocity of their ancestry, could not be domesticated on account of their antipathy to the human race, and were often dangerous if approached unguardedly, or wantonly disturbed. It was this last reason which has occasioned their being extirpated at the places we have mentioned, where probably they would otherwise have been retained as appropriate inhabitants of a Scottish woodland, and fit tenants for a baronial forest. A few, if

I mistake not, are still preserved at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland, the seat of the Earl of Tankerville.

It was to her finding herself in the vicinity of a group of three or four of these animals, that Lucy thought proper to impute those signs of fear, which had arisen in her countenance for a different reason. For she had been familiarized with the appearance of the wild cattle, during her walks in the chace; and it was not then, as now, a necessary part of a young lady's education, to indulge in causeless tremors of the nerves. On the present occasion, however, she speedily found cause for real terror.

Lucy had scarcely replied to her father in the words we have mentioned, and he was just about to rebuke her supposed timidity, when a bull, stimulated either by the scarlet colour of Miss Ashton's mantle, or by one of those fits of capricious ferocity to which their dispositions are liable, detached himself suddenly from the group which was feeding at the upper extremity of a grassy glade, that seemed to lose itself among the crossing and entangled boughs. The animal approached the intruders on his pasture ground, at first slowly, pawing the ground with his hoof, bellowing from time to time, and tearing up the sand with his horns, as if to lash himself up to rage and violence.

The Lord Keeper, who observed the animal's demeanour, was aware that he was about to become mischievous, and, drawing his daughter's arm under his own, began to walk fast along the avenue, in hopes to get out of his sight and his reach. This was the most injudicious course he could have adopted, for, encouraged by the appearance of flight, the bull began to pursue them at full speed. Assailed by a danger so imminent, firmer courage than that of the Lord Keeper might have given way. But paternal tenderness, "love strong as death," supported him. He continued to support and drag onward his daughter, until, her fears altogether depriving her of the power of flight, she sunk down by his side; and when he could no longer assist her to escape, he turned round and placed himself betwixt her and the raging animal, which advancing in full career, its brutal fury enhanced by the rapidity of the pursuit, was now within a few yards of them. The Lord Keeper had no weapons; his age and gravity dispensed even with the usual appendage of a walking sword, — could such appendage have availed him any thing.

It seemed inevitable that the father or daughter, or both, should have fallen victims to the impending danger, when a shot from the neighbouring thicket arrested the progress of the animal. He was so truly struck between the junction of the

spine with the skull, that the wound, which in any other part of his body might scarce have impeded his career, proved instantly fatal. Stumbling forward with a hideous bellow, the progressive force of his previous motion, rather than any operation of his limbs, carried him up to within three yards of the astonished Lord Keeper, where he rolled on the ground, his limbs darkened with the black death-sweat, and quivering with the last convulsions of muscular motion.

Lucy lay senseless on the ground, insensible of the wonderful deliverance which she had experienced. Her father was almost equally stupified, so rapid and so unexpected had been the transition from the horrid death which seemed inevitable, to perfect security. He gazed on the animal, terrible even in death, with a species of mute and confused astonishment, which did not permit him distinctly to understand what had taken place; and so inaccurate was his consciousness of what had passed, that he might have supposed the bull had been arrested in its career by a thunderbolt, had he not observed among the branches of the thicket the figure of a man, with a short gun or musquetoön in his hand.

This instantly recalled him to a sense of their situation — a glance at his daughter reminded him of the necessity of procuring her assistance. He called to the man, whom he concluded to

be one of his foresters, to give immediate attention to Miss Ashton, while he himself hastened to call assistance. The huntsman approached them accordingly, and the Lord Keeper saw he was a stranger, but was too much agitated to make any farther remarks. In a few hurried words, he directed the shooter, as stronger and more active than himself, to carry the young lady to a neighbouring fountain, while he went back to Alice's hut to procure more said.

The man to whose timely interference they had been so much indebted, did not seem inclined to leave his good work half finished. He raised Lucy from the ground in his arms, and conveying her through the glades of the forest by paths with which he seemed well acquainted, stopped not until he laid her in safety by the side of a plentiful and pellucid fountain, which had been once covered in, screened and decorated with architectural ornaments of a Gothic character. But now the vault which had covered it being broken down and riven, and the Gothic front ruined and demolished, the stream burst forth from the recess of the earth in open day, and winded its way among the broken sculpture and moss-grown stones which lay in confusion around its source.

Tradition, always busy, at least in Scotland, to grace with a legendary tale a spot in itself in-

teresting, had ascribed a cause of peculiar veneration to this fountain. A beautiful young lady met one of the Lords of Ravenswood while hunting near this spot, and, like a second Egeria, had captivated the affections of the feudal Numa. They met frequently afterwards, and always at sunset, the charms of the nymph's mind completing the conquest which her beauty had begun, and the mystery of the intrigue adding zest to both. She always appeared and disappeared close by the fountain, with which, therefore, her lover judged she had some inexplicable connection. She placed certain restrictions on their intercourse, which also savoured of mystery. They met only once a week, Friday was the appointed day, and she explained to the Lord of Ravenswood, that they were under the necessity of separating so soon as the bell of a chapel, belonging to a hermitage in the adjoining wood, now long ruinous, tolled the hour of vespers. In the course of his confession, the Baron of Ravenswood entrusted the hermit with the secret of this singular amour, and Father Zachary drew the necessary and obvious consequence, that his patron was enveloped in the toils of Satan, and in danger of destruction both to body and soul. He urged these perils to the Baron with all the force of monkish rhetoric, and described, in the most frightful colours, the real character and

person of the apparently lovely Naiad, whom he hesitated not to denounce as a limb of the kingdom of darkness. The lover listened with obstinate incredulity; and it was not until worn out by the obstinacy of the anchoret, that he consented to put the state and condition of his mistress to a certain trial, and for that purpose acquiesced in Zachary's proposal, that on their next interview the vespers bell should be rung half an hour later than usual. The hermit maintained and bucklered his opinion, by quotations from *Malleus Maleficarum*, *Sprengerus*, *Remigius*, and other learned dæmonologists, that the Evil One, thus seduced to remain behind the appointed hour, would assume her true shape, and having appeared to her terrified lover as a fiend of hell, would vanish from him in a flash of sulphureous lightning. Raymond of Ravenswood acquiesced in the experiment, not incurious concerning the issue, though confident it would disappoint the expectations of the hermit.

On the appointed hour the lovers met, and their interview was protracted beyond that at which they usually parted, by the delay of the priest to ring his usual curfew. No change took place upon the nymph's outward form; but as soon as the lengthening shadows made her aware that the usual hour of the vesper chime was passed, she tore herself from her lover's arms with a

shriek of despair, bid him adieu for ever, and plunging into the fountain, disappeared from his eyes. The bubbles occasioned by her descent were crimsoned with blood as they arose, leading the distracted Baron to infer, that his ill-judged curiosity had occasioned the death of this interesting and mysterious being. The remorse which he felt, as well as the recollection of her charms, proved the penance of his future life, which he lost in the battle of Flodden not many months after. But, in memory of his Naiad, he had previously ornamented the fountain in which she appeared to reside, and secured its waters from profanation or pollution, by the small vaulted building of which the fragments still remained scattered around it. From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay.

Such was the generally received legend, which some, who would seem wiser than the vulgar, explained, as obscurely intimating the fate of a beautiful maid of plebeian rank, the mistress of this Raymond, whom he slew in a fit of jealousy, and whose blood was mingled with the waters of the locked fountain, as it was commonly called. Others imagined that the tale had a more remote origin in the ancient heathen mythology. All however agreed, that the spot was fatal to the Ravenswood family; and that to drink of the waters of the well, or even approach its brink,

was as ominous to a descendant of that house, as for a Grahame to wear green, a Bruce to kill a spider, or a St Clair to cross the Ord on a Monday.

It was on this ominous spot that Lucy Ashton first drew breath after her long and almost deadly swoon. Beautiful and pale as the fabulous Naiad in the last agony of separation from her lover, she was seated so as to rest with her back against a part of the ruined wall, while her mantle, dripping with the water which her protector had used profusely to recal her senses, clung to her slender and beautifully proportioned form.

The first moment of recollection brought to her mind the danger which had overpowered her senses — the next called to remembrance that of her father. She looked around — he was no where to be seen — “My father — my father!” was all that she could ejaculate.

“Sir William is safe,” answered the voice of a stranger — “perfectly safe, and will be with you instantly.”

“Are you sure of that?” exclaimed Lucy — “the bull was close by us — do not stop me — I must go to seek my father.”

And she arose with that purpose; but her strength was so much exhausted, that, far from possessing the power to execute her purpose, she must have fallen against the stone on which

she had leant, probably not without sustaining serious injury.

The stranger was so near to her, that, without actually suffering her to fall, he could not avoid catching her in his arms, which, however, he did with a momentary reluctance, very unusual when youth interposes to prevent beauty from danger. It seemed as if her weight, slight as it was, proved too heavy for her young and athletic assistant, for, without feeling the temptation of detaining her in his arms even for a single instant, he again placed her on the stone from which she had risen, and retreating a few steps, repeated hastily, "Sir William Ashton is perfectly safe, and will be here instantly. Do not make yourself anxious on his account — Fate has singularly preserved him — You, madam, are exhausted, and must not think of rising until you have some assistance more suitable than mine."

Lucy, whose senses were by this time more effectually collected, was naturally led to look at the stranger with attention. There was nothing in his appearance which should have rendered him unwilling to offer his arm to a young lady who required support, or which could have induced her to refuse his assistance; and she could not help thinking, even in that moment, that he seemed cold and reluctant to offer it. A shooting dress of dark cloth, intimated the rank of the

wearer, though concealed in part by a large and loose cloak of a dark brown colour, A Montero cap, and a black feather drooped over the wearer's brow, and partly concealed his features, which, so far as seen, were dark, regular, and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen, expression, Some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion, had quenched the light and ingenuous vivacity of youth in a countenance singularly fitted to display both, and it was not easy to gaze on the stranger without a secret impression either of pity or awe, or at least of doubt and curiosity allied to both.

The impression which we have necessarily been long in describing, Lucy felt in the glance of a moment, and had no sooner encountered the keen black eyes of the stranger, than her own were bent on the ground with a mixture of bashful embarrassment and fear. Yet there was a necessity to speak, or at least she thought so, and in a fluttered accent she began to mention her wonderful escape, in which she was sure that the stranger must, under Heaven, have been her father's protector, and her own.

He seemed to shrink from her expressions of gratitude, while he replied abruptly, "I leave you, madam;" the deep melody of his voice rendered powerful, but not harsh, by something like a severity of tone — "I leave you to the

protection of those to whom it is possible you may have been this day a guardian angel."

Lucy was surprised at the ambiguity of his language, and, with a feeling of artless and unaffected gratitude, began to deprecate the idea of having intended to give her deliverer any offence, as if such a thing had been possible. "I have been unfortunate," she said, "in endeavouring to express my thanks — I am sure it must be so, though I cannot recollect what I said — but would you but stay till my father — till the Lord Keeper comes — would you only permit him to pay you his thanks, and to enquire your name?"

"My name is unnecessary," answered the stranger; "your father — I would rather say Sir William Ashton — will learn it soon enough, for all the pleasure it is likely to afford him."

"You mistake him," said Lucy earnestly; "he will be grateful for my sake and for his own. You do not know my father, or you are deceiving me with a story of his safety, when he has already fallen a victim to the fury of that animal."

When she had caught this idea, she started from the ground, and endeavoured to press towards the avenue in which the accident had taken place, while the stranger, though he seemed to hesitate between the desire to assist and the wish to leave her, was obliged, in common humanity, to oppose her both by entreaty and action.

“On the word of a gentleman, madam, I tell you the truth; your father is in perfect safety; you will expose yourself to injury if you venture back where the herd of wild cattle grazed — If you will go” — for, having once adopted the idea that her father was still in danger, she pressed forward in spite of him — “if you will go, accept my arm, though I am not perhaps the person who can with most propriety offer you support.”

But, without heeding this intimation, Lucy took him at his word. “O if you be a man,” she said, — “if you be a gentleman, assist me to find my father — You shall not leave me — you must go with me — he is dying perhaps while we are talking here.”

Then, without listening to excuse or apology, and holding fast by the stranger’s arm, though unconscious of any thing save the support which it gave, and without which she could not have moved, mixed with a vague feeling of preventing his escape from her, she was urging, and almost dragging him forward, when Sir William Ashton came up, followed by the female attendant of blind Alice, and by two wood-cutters, whom he had summoned from their occupation to his assistance. His joy at seeing his daughter safe, overcame the surprise with which he would at another time have be-

held her hanging as familiarly on the arm of a stranger, as she might have done upon his own.

“Lucy, my dear Lucy, are you safe? — are you well?” were the only words that broke from him as he embraced her in ecstasy.

“I am well, sir, thank God, and still more that I see you so; — but this gentleman,” she said, quitting his arm, and shrinking from him, “what must he think of me?” and her eloquent blood, flushing over neck and brow, spoke how much she was ashamed of the freedom with which she had craved, and even compelled his assistance.

“This gentleman,” said Sir William Ashton, “will, I trust, not regret the trouble we have given him, when I assure him of the gratitude of the Lord Keeper for the greatest service which one man ever rendered to another — for the life of my child — for my own life, which he has saved by his bravery and presence of mind. He will, I am sure, permit us to request —”

“Request nothing of me, my lord,” said the stranger, in a stern and peremptory tone; “I am the Master of Ravenswood.”

There was a dead pause of surprise, not unmixed with less pleasing feelings. The Master wrapt himself in his cloak, made a haughty inclination towards Lucy, muttering a few words of courtesy, as indistinctly heard as they seemed to

be reluctantly uttered, and turning from them was immediately lost in the thicket.

«The Master of Ravenswood!» said the Lord Keeper, when he had recovered his momentary astonishment. «Hasten after him — stop him — beg him to speak to me for a single moment.»

The two foresters accordingly set off in pursuit of the stranger. They speedily returned, and, in an embarrassed and awkward manner, said the gentleman would not return. The Lord Keeper took one of the fellows aside, and questioned him more closely what the Master of Ravenswood had said.

«He just said he wadna come back,» said the man, with the caution of a prudent Scotchman, who cared not to be the bearer of an unpleasant errand.

«He said something more, sir,» said the Lord Keeper, «and I insist on knowing what it was.»

«Why, then, my lord,» said the man, looking down, «he said — but it wad be nae pleasure to your lordship to hear it, for I dare say the Master meant nae ill.»

«That's none of your concern, sir; I desire to hear the very words.»

«Weel then,» replied the man, «he said, tell Sir William Ashton, that the next time he and I forgather, he will not be half sae blythe of our meeting as of our parting.»

“Very well, sir,” said the Lord Keeper, “I believe he alludes to a wager we have on our hawks it is a matter of no consequence.”

He turned to his daughter, who was by this time so much recovered as to be able to walk home. But the effect which the various recollections, connected with a scene so terrific, made upon a mind which was susceptible in an extreme degree, was more permanent than the injury which her nerves had sustained. Visions of terror, both in sleep and in waking reveries, recalled to her the form of the furious animal, and the dreadful bellow with which he accompanied his career; and it was always the image of the Master of Ravenswood, with his native nobleness of countenance and form, that seemed to interpose betwixt her and assured death. It is, perhaps, at all times dangerous for a young person to suffer recollection to dwell repeatedly, and with too much complacence, on the same individual; but in Lucy's situation it was almost unavoidable. She had never happened to see a young man of mien and features so romantic and so striking as young Ravenswood; but had she seen an hundred his equals or his superiors in those particulars, no one else could have been linked to her heart by the strong associations of remembered danger and escape, of gratitude, wonder, and curiosity. I say curiosity, for it is likely

that the singularly restrained and unaccommodating manners of the Master of Ravenswood, so much at variance with the natural expression of his features and grace of his deportment, as they excited wonder by the contrast, had their effect in rivetting her attention to the recollection. She knew little of Ravenswood, or the disputes which had existed betwixt her father and his, and perhaps could in her gentleness of mind hardly have comprehended the angry and bitter passions which they had engendered. But she knew that he was come of noble stem; was poor, though descended from the noble and the wealthy; and she felt that she could sympathize with the feelings of a proud mind, which urged him to recoil from the proffered gratitude of the new proprietors of his father's house and domains. Would he have equally shunned their acknowledgments and avoided their intimacy, had her father's request been urged more mildly, less abruptly, and softened with the grace which women so well know how to throw into their manner, when they mean to mediate betwixt the headlong passions of the ruder sex? This was a perilous question to ask her own mind — perilous both in the idea and in its consequences.

Lucy Ashton, in short, was involved in those mazes of the imagination which are most dangerous to the young and the sensitive. Time, it

is true, absence, change of place and of face, might probably have destroyed the illusion in her instance as it has done in many others; but her residence remained solitary, and her mind without those means of dissipating her pleasing visions. This solitude was chiefly owing to the absence of Lady Ashton, who was at this time in Edinburgh, watching the progress of some state-intrigue; the Lord Keeper only received society out of policy or ostentation, and was by nature rather reserved and unsociable; and thus no cavalier appeared to rival or to obscure the ideal picture of chivalrous excellence which Lucy had pictured to herself in the Master of Ravenswood.

While Lucy indulged in these dreams, she made frequent visits to old blind Alice, hoping it would be easy to lead her to talk on the subject, which at present she had imprudently admitted to occupy so large a portion of her thoughts. But Alice did not in this particular gratify her wishes and expectations. She spoke readily, and with pathetic feeling, concerning the family in general, but seemed to observe an especial and cautious silence on the subject of the present representative. The little she said of him was not altogether so favourable as Lucy had anticipated. She hinted that he was of a stern and unforgiving character, more ready to resent than to pardon injuries; and Lucy combined with great

alarm the hints which she now dropped of these dangerous qualities, with Alice's advice to her father, so emphatically given, "to beware of Ravenswood."

But that very Ravenswood, of whom such unjust suspicions had been entertained, had, almost immediately after they had been uttered, confuted them by saving at once her father's life and her own. Had he nourished such black revenge as Alice's dark hints seemed to indicate, no deed of active guilt was necessary to the full gratification of that evil passion. He needed but to have withheld for an instant his indispensable and effective assistance, and the object of his resentment must have perished, without any direct aggression on his part, by a death equally fearful and certain. She conceived, therefore, that some secret prejudice, or the suspicions incident to age and misfortune, had led Alice to form conclusions injurious to the character, and irreconcilable both with the generous conduct and noble features of the Master of Ravenswood. And in this belief Lucy reposed her hope, and went on weaving her enchanted web of fairy tissue, as beautiful and transient as the film of the gossamer, when it is pearled with the morning dew, and glimmering to the morning sun.

Her father, in the meanwhile, as well as the Master of Ravenswood, were making reflections,

as frequent, though more solid than those of Lucy, upon the singular event which had taken place. His first task, when he returned home, was to ascertain by medical assistance that his daughter had sustained no injury from the dangerous and alarming situation in which she had been placed. Satisfied on this topic, he proceeded to revise the memoranda which he had taken down from the mouth of the person employed to interrupt the funeral service of the late Lord Ravenswood. Bred to casuistry, and well accustomed to practise the ambi-dexter ingenuity of the bar, it cost him little trouble to soften the features of the tumult which he had been at first so anxious to exaggerate. He preached to his colleagues of the privy council the necessity of using conciliating measures with young men whose blood and temper were hot, and their experience of life limited. He did not hesitate to attribute some censure to the conduct of the officer, as having been unnecessarily irritating.

These were the contents of his public dispatches. The letters which he wrote to those private friends into whose management the matter was like to fall, were of a yet more favourable tenor. He represented that lenity in this case would be equally politic and popular, whereas, considering the high respect with which the rites of interment are regarded in Scotland, any severity exercised

against the Master of Ravenswood for protecting those of his father from interruption, would be on all sides most unfavourably construed. And, finally, assuming the language of a generous and high-spirited man, he made it his particular request that this affair should be passed over without severe notice. He alluded with delicacy to the predicament in which he himself stood with young Ravenswood, as having succeeded in the long train of litigation by which the fortunes of that noble house had been so much reduced, and confessed it would be most peculiarly acceptable to his own feelings, could he find means in some sort to counterbalance the disadvantages which he had occasioned the family, though only in the prosecution of his just and lawful rights. He therefore made it his particular and personal request that the matter should have no further consequences, and insinuated a desire that he himself should have the merit of having put a stop to it by his favourable report and intercession. It was particularly remarkable, that, contrary to his uniform practice, he made no special communication to Lady Ashton upon the subject of the tumult; and although he mentioned the alarm which Lucy had received from one of the wild cattle, yet he gave no detailed account of an incident so interesting and terrible.

There was much surprise among Sir William

Ashton's political friends and colleagues on receiving letters of a tenor so unexpected. On comparing notes together, one smiled, one put up his eye-brows, a third nodded acquiescence in the general wonder, and a fourth asked, if they were sure these were *all* the letters the Lord Keeper had written on the subject. "It runs strangely in my mind, my lords, that none of these advices contain the root of the matter."

But no secret letters of a contrary nature had been received, although the question seemed to imply the possibility of their existence.

"Well," said an old grey-headed statesman, who had contrived, by shifting and trimming, to maintain his post at the steerage through all the changes of course which the vessel had held for thirty years, "I thought Sir William would hae verified the auld Scottish saying, 'as soon comes the lamb's skin to market as the auld tup's.'"

"We must please him after his own fashion," said another, "though it be an unlooked-for one."

"A wilful man maun hae his way," answered the old counsellor.

"The Keeper will rue this before year and day are out," said a third; "the Master of Ravenswood is the lad to wind him a pirn."

"Why, what would you do, my lords, with the poor young fellow?" said a noble Marquis

present; «the Lord Keeper has got all his estates — he has not a cross to bless himself with.»

On which the ancient Lord Turntippet replied,

«If he hasna gear to fine,
He has shins to pine —

And that was our way before the Revolution —
*Luitur cum persona, qui luere non potest cum
crumena* — Hegh, my lords, that's gude law
Latin.»

«I can see no motive,» replied the Marquis,
«that any noble lord can have for urging this mat-
ter farther; let the Lord Keeper have the power
to deal in it as he pleases.»

«Agree, agree — remit to the Lord Keeper,
with any other person for fashion's sake — Lord
Hirplehooly, who is bed-ridden — one to be a
quorum — Make your entry in the minutes, Mr
Clerk. — And now, my lords, there is that young
scattergood, the Laird of Bucklaw's fine to be
disponed upon — I suppose it goes to my Lord
Treasurer.»

«Shame be in my meal-poke then,» exclaimed
Lord Turntippet, «and your hand aye in the nook
of it. I had set that down for a bye bit between
meals for mysel.»

«To use one of your favourite saws, my lord,»
replied the Marquis, «you are like the miller's

dog, that licks his lips before the bag is untied — the man is not fined yet."

"But that costs but twa skarts of a pen," said Lord Turntippet; "and surely there is nae noble lord that will presume to say, that I, wha hae complied wi' a' compliances, tane all manner of tests, abjured all that was to be abjured, and sworn a' that was to be sworn, for these thirty years bypast, sticking fast by my duty to the state through good report and bad report, shouldna hae something now and then to synde my mouth wi' after sic drouthy wark."

"It would be very unreasonable indeed, my lord," replied the Marquis, "had we either thought that your lordship's drought was quenchable, or observed any thing stick in your throat that required washing down."

And so we close the scene on the Privycouncil of that period.

CHAPTER VI.

*For this are all these warriors come,
To hear an idle tale;
And o'er our death-accustomed arms
Shall silly tears prevail?*

ON the evening of the day when the Lord Keeper and his daughter were saved from such imminent peril, two strangers were seated in the most private apartment of a small obscure inn, or rather ale-house, called the Tod's Den, about three or four miles from the Castle of Ravenswood, and as far from the ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, betwixt which two places it was situated.

One of these strangers was about forty years of age, tall, and thin in the flanks, with an aquiline nose, dark penetrating eyes, and a shrewd but sinister cast of countenance. The other was about fifteen years younger, short, stout, ruddy-faced,

and red-haired, with an open, resolute, and cheerful eye, to which careless and fearless freedom, and inward daring, gave fire and expression, notwithstanding its light grey colour. A stoup of wine, for in those days it was served out from the cask in pewter flaggons, was placed on the table, and each had his quaigh or bicker *) before him. But there was little appearance of conviviality. With folded arms, and looks of anxious expectation, they eyed each other in silence, each wrapt in his own thoughts, and holding no communication with his neighbour.

At length the younger broke silence by exclaiming, "What the foul fiend can detain the Master so long? he must have miscarried in his enterprise. — Why did you dissuade me from going with him?"

"One man is enough to right his own wrong," said the taller and older personage; „we venture our lives for him in coming thus far on such an errand."

*) Drinking cups, of different sizes, made out of staves hooped together. The *quaigh* was used chiefly for drinking wine or brandy; it might hold about a gill, and was often composed of rare wood, and curiously ornamented with silver.

“You are but a craven after all, Craigengelt,” answered the younger, „and that’s what many folks have thought you before now.”

“But what none has dared to tell me,” said Craigengelt, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword; „and, but that I hold a hasty man no better than a fool, I would” — he paused for his companion’s answer.

“*Would* you?” said the other coolly; „and why do you not then?”

Craigengelt drew his cutlass an inch or two, and then returned it with violence into the scabbard — „Because there is a deeper stake than the lives of twenty hair-brained gowks like you.”

“You are right there,” said his companion, „for if it were not that these forfeitures, and that last fine that the old driveller Turntippit is gaping for, and which, I dare say, is laid on by this time, have fairly driven me out of house, and I were a coxcomb and a cuckoo to boot, to trust your fair promises of getting me a commission in the Irish brigade, — what have I to do with the Irish brigade? I am a plain Scotchman, as my father was before me; and my grand aunt, Lady Girnington, cannot live for ever.”

“Ay, Bucklaw,” observed Craigengelt, „but she may live for many a long day; and for your father, he had land and living, kept himself close from wadsetters and moneylenders, paid each man his due, and lived on his own.”

“And whose fault is it that I have not so too?” said Bucklaw —” whose but the devil’s and your’s, and such like as you, that have led me to the far end of a fair estate; and now I shall be obliged, I suppose, to shelter and shift about like yourself — live one week upon a line of secret intelligence from Saint Germain — another upon a report of a rising in the Highlands — get my breakfast and morning draught of sack from old Jacobite ladies, and give them locks of my old wig for the Chevalier’s hair — second my friend in his quarrel till he comes to the field, and then flinch from him lest so important a political agent should perish from the way. All this I must do for bread, besides calling myself a captain!”

“You think you are making a fine speech now,” said Craigengelt, “and shewing much wit at my expence. Is starving or hanging better than the life I am obliged to lead, because the present fortunes of the king cannot sufficiently support his envoys?”

“Starving is honestest, Craigengelt, and hanging is like to be the end on’t — But what you mean to make of this poor fellow Ravenswood, I know not — he has no money left, any more than I — his lands are all pawned and pledged, and the interest eats up the rents, and is not satisfied, and what do you hope to make by meddling in his affairs?”

“Content yourself, Bucklaw; I know my business,” replied Craigengelt. „Besides that his name, and his father’s services in 1689, will make such an acquisition sound well both at Versailles and Saint Germain — you will also please be informed, that the Master of Ravenswood is a very different kind of a young fellow from you. He has parts and address, as well as courage and talents, and will present himself abroad like a young man of head as well as heart, who knows something more than the speed of a horse or the flight of a hawk. I have lost credit of late, by bringing over no one that had sense to know more than how to unharbour a stag, or take and reclaim an eyess. The Master has education, sense, and penetration.”

“And yet is not wise enough to escape the tricks of a kidnapper, Craigengelt? — But don’t be angry; you know you will not fight, and so it is as well to leave your hilt in peace and quiet, and tell me in sober guise how you drew the Master into your confidence?”

“By flattering his love of vengeance, Bucklaw. He has always distrusted me, but I watched my time, and struck while his temper was red-hot with the sense of insult and of wrong. He goes now to expostulate, as he says, and perhaps thinks, with Sir William Ashton. — I say, that if they meet, and the lawyer puts him to his defence,

the Master will kill him; for he had that sparkle in his eye which never deceives you when you would read a man's purpose. At any rate, he will give him such a bullying as will be construed into an assault on a privy-counsellor; so there will be a total breach betwixt him and government; Scotland will be too hot for him, France will gain him, and we will all set sail together in the French brig L'Espoir, which is hovering for us off Eyemouth.

„Content am I,” said Bucklaw; „Scotland has little left that I care about; and if carrying the Master with us will get us a better reception in France, why, so be it, a God's name. I doubt our own merits will procure us slender preferment; and I trust he will send a ball through the Keeper's head before he joins us. One or two of these scoundrel statesman should be shot once a-year, just to keep the others on their good behaviour.”

„That is very true,” replied Craigengelt; „and it reminds me that I must go and see that our horses have been fed, and are in readiness; for, should such deed be done, it will be no time for grass to grow beneath their heels.” He proceeded as far as the door, then turned back with a look of earnestness, and said to Bucklaw, „Whatever should come of this business, I am sure you will do me the justice to remember, that I said nothing to the Master which could

imply my accession to any act of violence which he may take it into his head to commit."

"No, no, not a single word like accession," replied Bucklaw; „you know too well the risk belonging too these two terrible words, art and part." Then, as if to himself, he recited the following lines:

„The dial spoke not, but it made shrewd signs,
And pointed full upon the stroke of murder."

"What is that you are talking to yourself?" said Craigengelt, turning back with some anxiety.

"Nothing — only two lines I have heard upon the stage," replied his companion.

"Bucklaw," said Craigengelt, „I sometimes think you should have been a stageplayer yourself; all is fancy and frolic with you."

"I have often thought so myself," said Bucklaw. „I believe it would be safer than acting with you in *The Fatal Conspiracy*. — But away, play your own part, and look after the horses like a groom as you are. — A play-actor! a stage-player! that would have deserved a stab, but that Craigengelt's a coward — And yet I should like the profession well enough — Stay — let me see — ay — I would come out in *Alexander* —

'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love,
Draw all your swords, and quick as lightning
move;

When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay,
'Tis love commands, and glory leads the way.'

As with a voice of thunder, and his hand upon his sword, Bucklaw repeated the ranting couplets of poor Lee, Craigengelt re-entered with a face of alarm.

"We are undone, Bucklaw! the Master's led horse has cast himself over his halter in the stable, and is dead lame — his hackney will be set up with the day's work, and now he has no fresh horse; he will never get off."

"Egad there will be no moving with the speed of lightning this bout," said Bucklaw, drily. "But stay, you can give him yours."

"What, and be taken myself? I thank you for the proposal," said Craigengelt.

"Why, if the Lord Keeper should have met with a mischance, which for my part I cannot suppose, for the Master is not the lad to shoot an old and unarmed man — but *if* there should have been a fray at the Castle, you are neither art nor part in it you know, so have nothing to fear."

"True, true," answered the other, with embar-
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rassment; „but consider my commission from Saint Germain's."

„Which many men think is a commission of your own making, noble captain. Well, if you will not give him your horse, why, d—n it, he must have mine."

„Yours?" said Craigengelt.

„Ay, mine," repeated Bucklaw; „it shall never be said that I agreed to back a gentleman in a little affair of honour, and neither helped him on with it nor off from it."

„You will give him your horse? and have you considered the loss?"

„Loss! why Grey Gilbert cost me twenty Jacobuses, that's true; but then his hackney is worth something, and his Black Moor is worth twice as much were he sound, and I know how to handle him. — Take a fat sucking mastiff whelp, flay and bowel him, stuff the body full of black and grey snails, roast a reasonable time, and baste with oil of spikenard, saffron, cinnamon and honey, anoint with the dripping, working it in" —

„Yes, Bucklaw, but in the meanwhile, before the sprain is cured, nay before the whelp is roasted, you will be caught and hung. Depend on it, the chase will be hard after Ravenswood. I wish we had made our place of rendezvous nearer to the coast."

„On my faith then,” said Bucklaw, „I had best go off just now, and leave my horse for him — Stay, stay, he comes, I hear a horse’s feet.”

„Are you sure there is only one?” said Craigengelt; „I fear there is a chase; I think I hear three or four galloping together; I am sure I hear more horses than one.”

„Pooh, pooh, it is the wench of the house that is clattering to the well in her pattens; by my faith, captain, you should give up both your captainship and your secret service, for you are as easily scared as a wild goose. But here comes the Master alone, and looking as gloomy as a night in November.”

The Master of Ravenswood entered the room accordingly, his cloak muffled around him, his arms folded, his looks stern, and at the same time dejected. He flung his cloak from him as he entered, threw himself upon a chair, and appeared sunk in a profound reverie.

„What has happened? What have you done?” was hastily demanded by Craigengelt and Bucklaw in the same moment.

„Nothing,” was the short and sullen answer.

„Nothing?” and left us, determined to call the old villain to account for all the injuries that you, we, and the country have received at his hand? Have you seen him?”

„I have,” replied the Master of Ravenswood.

„Seen him? and come away without settling scores which have been so long due?” said Bucklaw; „I would not have expected that at the hand of the Master of Ravenswood.”

„No matter what you expected,” replied Ravenswood; „it is not to you, sir, that I shall be disposed to render any reason for my conduct.”

„Patience, Bucklaw,” said Craigengelt, interrupting his companion, who seemed about to make an angry reply. „The master has been interrupted in his purpose by some accident, but he must excuse the anxious curiosity of friends, who are devoted to his cause like you and me.”

„Friends, Captain Craigengelt!” retorted Ravenswood haughtily, „I am ignorant what familiarity has passed betwixt us to entitle you to use that expression. I think our friendship amounts to this, that we agreed to leave Scotland together so soon as I should have visited the alienated mansion of my fathers, and had an interview with its present possessor, I will not call him proprietor.”

„Very true, Master,” answered Bucklaw; „and as we thought you had a mind to do something to put your neck in jeopardy, Craig and I very courteously agreed to tarry for you, although ours might run some risk in consequence. As to Craig, indeed, it does not very much signify,

he had gallows written on his brow in the hour of his birth; but I should not like to discredit my parentage by coming to such an end in another man's cause."

"Gentlemen," said the Master of Ravenswood, "I am sorry if I have occasioned you any inconvenience, but I must claim the right of judging what is best for my own affairs, without rendering any explanations to any one. I have altered my mind, and do not design to leave the country this season."

"Not to leave the country, Master!" exclaimed Craigengelt. "Not to go over, after all the trouble and expence I have incurred — after all the risk of discovery, and the expence of freight and demurrage!"

"Sir," replied the Master of Ravenswood, "when I designed to leave this country in this haste, I made use of your obliging offer to procure me means of conveyance; but I do not recollect that I pledged myself to go off, if I found occasion to alter my mind. For your trouble on my account, I am sorry, and I thank you; your expence," he added, putting his hand into his pocket, "admits a more solid compensation — freight and demurrage are matters with which I am unacquainted, Captain Craigengelt, but take my purse and pay yourself according to your own consci.

ence." And accordingly he tendered a purse with some gold in it to the soi-disant captain.

But here Bucklaw interposed in his turn. „Your fingers, Craigie, seem to itch for that same piece of green net-work," said he; „but I make my vow to God, that if they offer to close upon it, I will chop them off with my whinger. Since the Master has changed his mind, I suppose we need stay here no longer; but in the first place I beg leave to tell him —"

„Tell him any thing you will," said Craigengelt, „if you will first allow me to state the inconveniencies to which he will expose himself by quitting our society, to remind him of the obstacles to his remaining here, and of the difficulties attending his proper introduction at Versailles and Saint Germain, without the countenance of those who have established useful connections."

„Besides forfeiting the friendship," said Bucklaw, „of at least one man of spirit and honour."

„Gentlemen," said Ravenswood, „permit me once more to assure you, that you have been pleased to attach to our temporary connection more importance than I ever meant that it should have. When I repair to foreign courts, I shall not need the introduction of an intriguing adventurer, nor is necessary for me to set value on the friendship of an hot-headed bully." With these words, and without waiting for an answer,

he left the apartment, remounted his horse, and was heard to ride off.

„Mortbleu!“ said Captain Craigengelt, „my recruit is lost.“

„Ay, captain,“ said Bucklaw, „the salmon is off with hook and all. But I will after him, for I have had more of his insolence than I can well digest.“

Craigengelt offered to accompany him, but Bucklaw replied, „No, no, captain, keep you the cheek of the chimney-nook till I come back; its good sleeping in a hale skin.“

‘Little kens the auld wife that sits by the fire,
How cauld the wind blaws in hurle-burleswire.’“

And singing as he went, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

*Now, Billy Bewick, keep good heart,
And of thy talking let me be;
But if thou art a man, as I am sure thou art,
Come over the dike and fight with me.*

Old Ballad.

THE Master of Ravenswood had mounted the ambling hackney which he before rode on, finding the accident which had happened to his led horse, and, for the animal's ease, was proceeding at a slow pace from the Tod's Den towards his old tower of Wolf's Crag, when he heard the galloping of a horse behind him, and, looking back, perceived that he was pursued by young Bucklaw, who had been delayed a few minutes in the pursuit by the irresistible temptation of giving the hostler at the Tod's Den some receipt for treating the lame horse. This brief delay he had made up by

hard gallopping, and now overtook the Master where the road traversed a waste moor. „Halt, sir,” cried Bucklaw; „I am no political agent—no Captain Craigengelt, whose life is too important to be hazarded in defence of his honour. I am Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, and no man injures me by word, deed, sign, or look, but he must render me an account of it.”

„This is all very well, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw,” replied the Master of Ravenswood, in a tone the most calm and indifferent; „but I have no quarrel with you, and desire to have none. Our roads homeward, as well as our roads through life, lie in different directions; there is no occasion for us crossing each other.”

„Is there not?” said Bucklaw, impetuously. „By Heaven! but I say that there is, though — you called us intriguing adventurers.”

„Be correct in your recollection, Mr Hayston; it was to your companion only I applied that epithet, and you know him to be no better.”

„And what then? He was my companion for the time, and no man shall insult my companion, right or wrong, while he is in my company.”

„Then, Mr Hayston,” replied Ravenswood, with the same composure, „you should chuse your society better, or you are like to have much work in your capacity of their champion.

Go home, sir, sleep, and have more reason in your wrath to-morrow."

"Not so, Master, you have mistaken your man; high airs and wise saws shall not carry it off thus. Besides, you termed me bully, and you shall retract the word before we part."

"Faith, scarcely," said Ravenswood, "unless you shew me better reason for thinking myself mistaken than you are now producing."

"Then, Master," said Bucklaw, "though I should be sorry to offer it to a man of your quality, if you will not justify your incivility, or retract it, or name a place of meeting, you must here undergo the hard word and the hard blow."

"Neither will be necessary," said Ravenswood; "I am satisfied with what I have done to avoid an affair with you. If you are serious, this place will serve as well as another."

"Dismount then, and draw," said Bucklaw, setting him the example. "I always thought and said you were a pretty man; I should be sorry to report you otherwise."

"You shall have no reason, sir," said Ravenswood, alighting, and putting himself into a posture of defence.

Their swords crossed, and the combat commenced with great spirit on the part of Bucklaw, who was well accustomed to affairs of the kind, and distinguished by address and dexterity at his

weapon. In the present case, however, he did not use his skill to advantage; for having lost temper at the cool and contemptuous manner in which the Master of Ravenswood had long refused, and at length granted him satisfaction, and urged by his impatience, he adopted the part of an assailant with inconsiderate eagerness. The Master, with equal skill, and much greater composure, remained chiefly on the defensive, and even declined to avail himself of one or two advantages afforded him by the eagerness of his adversary. At length, in a desperate lounge, which he followed with an attempt to close, Bucklaw's foot slipped, and he fell on the short grassy turf on which they were fighting. "Take your life, sir," said the Master of Ravenswood, "and mend it, if you can."

"It would be but a cobbled piece of work, I fear," said Bucklaw, rising slowly and gathering up his sword, much less disconcerted with the issue of the combat than could have been expected from the impetuosity of his temper. "I thank you for my life, Master," he pursued. "There is my hand, I bear no ill will to you either for my bad luck, or your better swordmanship."

The Master looked steadily at him for an instant, then extended his hand to him. — "Bucklaw," he said, "you are a generous fellow, and I have done you wrong. I heartily ask your pardon for

the expression which offended you; it was hastily and incautiously uttered, and I am convinced it is totally misapplied."

"Are you indeed, Master?" said Bucklaw, his face resuming at once its natural expression of light-hearted carelessness and audacity; that is more than I expected of you, for, Master, men say, you are not too ready to retract your opinions and your language."

"Not when I have well considered them," said the Master.

"Then you are a little wiser than I am; for I always give my friend satisfaction first, and explanation afterwards. If one of us falls, all accounts are settled; if not, men are never so ready for peace as after war. But what does that bawling brat of a boy want?" said Bucklaw. "I wish to Heaven he had come a few minutes sooner, and yet it must have been ended some time, and perhaps this way is as well as any other."

As he spoke, the boy he mentioned came up, cudgelling an ass, on which he was mounted, to the top of its speed, and sending, like one of Ossian's heroes, his voice before him, — "Gentlemen, — gentlemen, save yourselves; for the gudewife bade us tell ye there were folk in her house had ta'en Captain Craigengelt, and were

seeking for Bucklaw, and that ye behoved to ride for it."

"By my faith, and that's very true, my man," said Bucklaw; „and there's a silver sixpence for your news, and I would give any man twice as much would tell me which way I should ride."

"That will I, Bucklaw," said Ravenswood; ride home to Wolf's Crag with me; there are places in the old tower where you might lie hid, were a thousand men to seek you."

"But that will bring you into trouble yourself, Master; and unless you be in the Jacobite scrape already, it is needless for me to drag you in."

"Not a whit; I have nothing to fear."

"Then I will ride with you blithely, for, to say the truth, I do not know the rendezvous that Craigie was to guide us to this night; and I am sure that, if he is taken, he will tell all the truth on me, and twenty lies on you, in order to save himself from the withie."

They mounted, and rode off in company accordingly, striking off the ordinary road, and holding their way by wild moorish unfrequented paths, with which the gentlemen were well acquainted from the exercise of the chace, but through which others would have had much difficulty in tracing their course. They rode for some time in silence, making such haste as the condition of Ravenswood's horse permitted, until night

having gradually closed around them, they discontinued their speed, both from the difficulty of discovering their path, and from the hope that they were beyond the reach of pursuit or observation.

“And now that we have drawn bridle abit,” said Bucklaw, “I would fain ask you a question, Master.”

“Ask, and welcome,” said Ravenswood, “but forgive me not answering it, unless I think proper.”

“Well, it is simply this,” answered his late antagonist, “What, in the name of old Sathan could make you, who stand so highly on your reputation, think for a moment of drawing up with such a rogue as Craigengelt, and such a scape-grace as folks call Bucklaw?”

“Simply, because I was desperate, and sought desperate associates.”

“And what made you break off from us at the nearest?” again demanded Bucklaw.

“Because I had changed my mind,” said the Master, “and renounced my enterprize, at least for the present. And now that I have answered your questions fairly and frankly, tell me what makes you associate with Craigengelt, so much beneath you both in birth and in spirit?”

“In plain terms,” answered Bucklaw, “because I am a fool, who have gambled away my land

in these times. My grandaunt, Lady Girnington, has ta'en a new tack of life, I think, and I could only hope to get something by a change of government. Craigie was a sort of gambling acquaintance; he saw my condition, and, as the devil is always at one's elbow, told me fifty lies about his credentials from Versailles, and his interest at Saint Germain's, promised me a captain's commission at Paris, and I have been ass enough to put my thumb under his belt. I dare say, by this time, he has told a dozen pretty stories of me to the government. And this is what I have got by wine, women, and dice, cocks, dogs, and horses."

"Yes, Bucklaw," said the Master, "you have indeed nourished in your bosom the snakes that are now stinging you."

"That's home as well as true, Master," replied his companion; "but, by your leave, you have nursed in your bosom one great goodly snake that has swallowed all the rest, and is as sure to devour you as my half dozen are to make a meal on all that's left of Bucklaw, which is but what lies between bonnet and boot-heel."

"I must not," answered the Master of Ravenswood, "challenge the freedom of speech in which I have set example. What, to speak without a metaphor, do you call this monstrous passion which you charge me with fostering?"

“Revenge, my good sir, revenge, which, if it be as gentleman-like a sin as wine and wassail, with all their *et cæteras*, is equally unchristian, and not so bloodless. It is better breaking a park-pale to watch a doe or damsel, than to shoot an old man.”

“I deny the purpose,” said the Master of Ravenswood. “On my soul, I had no such intention; I meant but to confront the oppressor ere I left my native land, and upbraid him with his tyranny and its consequences. I would have stated my wrongs so that they would have shaken his soul within him.”

“Yes,” answered Bucklaw, “and he would have collared you, and cried help, and then you would have shaken the soul out of him, I suppose. Your very look and manner would have frightened the old man to death.”

“Consider the provocation,” answered Ravenswood, — “consider the ruin and death procured and caused by his hardhearted cruelty — an ancient house destroyed, an affectionate father murdered. Why, in our old Scottish days, he that sat quiet under such wrongs, would have been held neither fit to back a friend or face a foe.”

“Well, Master, I am glad to see that the devil deals as cunningly with other folk as he does with me; for whenever I am about to commit any folly, he persuades me it is the most neces-

sary, gallant, gentlemanlike thing on earth, and I am up to saddlegirths in the bog before I see that the ground is soft. And you, Master, might have turned out a murd — a homicide, just out of pure respect for your father's memory."

"There is more sense in your language, Bucklaw," replied the Master, "than might have been expected from your conduct. It is too true, our vices steal upon us in forms outwardly as fair as those of the demons whom the superstitious represent as intriguing with the human race, and are not discovered in their native hideousness until we have clasped them in our arms."

"But we may throw them from us though," said Bucklaw, "and that is what I shall think of doing one of these days, that is when old Lady Cirn-ington dies."

"Did you ever hear the expression of the English divine?" said Ravenswood —

"Hell is paved with good intentions,"

"As much as to say, they are more often formed than executed."

"Well," replied Bucklaw, "but I will begin this blessed night, and have determined not to drink above one quart of wine, unless your claret be of extraordinary quality."

"You will find little to tempt you at Wolf's

Crag," said the Master. "I know not that I can promise you more than the shelter of my roof; all, and more than all our stock of wine and provisions was exhausted at the late occasion."

"Long may it be ere provision is needed for the like purpose," answered Bucklaw; "but you should not drink up the last flask at a dirge; there is ill luck in that."

"There is ill luck, I think, in whatever belongs to me," said Ravenswood. "But yonder is Wolf's Crag, and whatever it still contains is at your service."

The roar of the sea had long announced their approach to the cliffs, on the summit of which, like the nest of some sea-eagle, the founder of the fortalice had perched his eyry. The pale moon, which had hitherto been contending with flitting clouds, now shone out, and gave them a view of the solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German ocean. On three sides the rock was precipitous; on the fourth, which was that toward the land, it had been originally fenced by an artificial ditch and draw-bridge, but the latter was broken down and ruinous, and the former had been in part filled up, so as to allow passage for a horseman into the narrow court-yard, encircled on two sides with low offices and stables, partly ruinous, and closed on the landward front by a low em-

battled wall, while the remaining side of the quadrangle was occupied by the tower itself, which, tall and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder, or more disconsolate dwelling, it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye — a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.

Although the night was not far advanced, there was no sign of living inhabitant about this forlorn abode, excepting that one, and only one, of the narrow and staunchelled windows which appeared at irregular heights and distances in the walls of the building, showed a small glimmer of light.

“There,” said Ravenswood, “sits the only male domestic that remains to the house of Ravenswood; and it is well that he does remain there, since otherwise, we had little hope to find either light or fire. But follow me cautiously; the road is narrow, and admits only one horse in front.”

In effect, the path led along a kind of isthmus, at the peninsular extremity of which the tower was situated, with that exclusive attention to strength and security, in preference to every circumstance of convenience, which dictated to the

Scottish barons the choice of their situations, as well as their style of building.

By adopting the cautious mode of approach recommended by the proprietor of this wild hold, they entered the court-yard in safety. But it was long ere the efforts of Ravenswood, though loudly exerted by knocking at the low-browed entrance, and repeated shouts to Caleb to open the gate and admit them, received any answer. „The old man must be departed,” he began to say, „or fallen into some fit; for the noise I have made would have waked the seven sleepers.”

At length a timid and hesitating voice replied, — “Master — Master of Ravenswood, is it you?”

“Yes, it is I, Caleb; open the door quickly.”

“But is it you in very blood and body? For I would sooner face fifty devils as my master’s ghaist, or even his wraith, — wherefore aroint ye, if ye were ten times my master, unless ye come in bodily shape, lith and limb.”

“It is I, you old fool,” answered Ravenswood, „in bodily shape, and alive, save that I am half dead with cold.”

The light at the upper window disappeared, and glancing from loop-hole to loop-hole in slow succession, gave intimation that the bearer was in the act of descending, with great deliberation, a winding stair-case occupying one of the turrets which graced the angles of the old tower. The

tardiness of his descent extracted some exclamations of impatience from Ravenswood, and several oaths from his less patient and more mercurial companion. Caleb again paused ere he unbolted the door, and once more asked, if they were men of mould that demanded entrance at this time of night?

“Were I near you, you old fool,” said Bucklaw, „I would give you sufficient proofs of my bodily condition.”

“Open the gate, Caleb,” said his master, in a more soothing tone, partly from his regard to the ancient and faithful seneschal, partly perhaps because he thought that angry words would be thrown away, so long as Caleb had a stout iron-clenched oaken door betwixt his person and the speakers.

At length Caleb, with a trembling hand, undid the bars, opened the heavy door, and stood before them, exhibiting his thin grey hairs, bald forehead, and sharp high features, illuminated by a quivering lamp which he held in one hand, while he shaded and protected its flame with the other. The timorous courteous glance which he threw around him — the effect of the partial light upon his white hair and illumined features, might have made a good painting; but our travellers were too impatient for security against the rising storm, to permit them to indulge themselves

in studying the picturesque. „Is it you, my dear master? is it yourself indeed?” exclaimed the old domestic. „I am wae ye suld he stude waiting at your ain gate, but wha wad hae thought o’ seeing ye sae sune, and a strange gentleman with a — (here he exclaimed apart as it were, and to some inmate of the tower, in a voice not meant to be heard by those in the court) — Mysie — Mysie, woman, stir for dear life and get the fire mended; take the auld three-legged stool, or ony thing that’s readiest that will make a lowe. — I doubt we are but puirly provided, no expecting ye this some months, when doubtless ye wad hae been received conform till your rank, as gude right is; but natheless” —

„Natheless, Calcb,” said the Master, „we must have our horses put up, and ourselves too, the best way we can. I hope you are not sorry to see me sooner than you expected?”

„Sorry, my lord! — I am sure ye sall aye be my lord wi’ honest folk, as your noble ancestors hae been these three hundred years, and never asked a whig’s leave. — Sorry to see the Lord of Ravenswood at ane o’ his ain castles! — (Then again apart to his unseen associate behind the screen) — Mysie, kill the brood-hen without thinking twice on it; let them care that come ahint. — No to say its our best dwelling,” he added, turning to Bucklaw, „but just a strength

for the Lord of Ravenswood to flee until, — that is, no to *flee*, but to retreat until in troublous times, like the present, when it was ill convenient for him to live farther in the country in any of his better and mair principal manors; but, for its antiquity, maist folks think that the outside of Wolf's Crag is worthy of a large perusal."

"And you are determined we shall have time to make it," said Ravenswood, somewhat amused with the shifts the old man used to detain them without doors, until his confederate Mysie had made her preparations within.

"O, never mind the outside of the house, my good friend," said Bucklaw; "let's see the inside, and let our horses see the stable, that's all."

O yes, sir — ay, sir — unquestionably, sir, — my lord and any of his honourable companions" —

"But our horses, my old friend — our horses; they will be dead-foundered by standing here in the cold after riding hard, and mine is too good to be spoiled; therefore, once more, our horses," exclaimed Bucklaw.

"True — ay — your horses — yes — I will call the grooms;" and sturdily did Caleb roar till the old tower rung again, — "John — William — Saunders! — The lads are gane out, or sleeping," he observed, after pausing for an an-

swer, which he knew that he had no human chance of receiving. "A' gaes wrang when the Master's out bye; but I'll take care o' your cattle mysell."

"I think you had better," said Ravenswood, "otherwise I see little chance of their being attended to at all."

"Whisht, my lord, — whisht, for God's sake," said Caleb, in an imploring tone, and apart to his master; "if ye dinna regard your ain credit, think on mine; we'll hae hard eneugh wark to make a decent night o't, wi' a' the lies I can tell."

"Well, well, never mind," said his master; "go to the stable. There is hay and corn, I trust?"

"Ou ay, plenty of hay and corn;" this was uttered boldly and aloud, and, in a lower tone, "there was some half fous o' aits, and some taitis o' meadow-hay, left after the burial."

"Very well," said Ravenswood, taking the lamp from his domestic's unwilling hand, "I will shew the stranger up stairs myself."

"I canna think o' that, my lord; — if ye wad but have five minutes, or ten minutes, or, at maist, a quarter of an hour's patience, and look at the fine moonlight prospect of the Bass and North-Berwick Law till I sort the horses, I would marshal ye up, as reason is ye suld be marshalled,

your lordship and your honourable visitor. And I hae lockit up the siller candlesticks, and the lamp is not fit" —

"It will do very well in the meantime," said Ravenswood, „and you will have no difficulty for want of light in the stable, for, if I recollect, half the roof is off."

"Very true, my lord," replied the trusty adherent, and with ready wit instantly added, „and the lazy sclater loons have never come to put it on a' this while, your lordship."

„If I were disposed to jest at the calamities of my house," said Ravenswood, as he led the way up stairs, „poor old Caleb would furnish me with ample means. His passion consists in representing things about our miserable *menage*, not as they are, but as, in his opinion, they ought to be; and, to say the truth, I have been often diverted with the poor wretch's expedients to supply what he thought was essential for the credit of the family, and his still more generous apologies for the want of those articles for which his ingenuity could discover no substitute. But though the tower is none of the largest, I shall have some trouble without him to find the apartment in which there is a fire."

As he spoke thus, he opened the door of the hall. „Here, at least," he said, „there is neither hearth nor harbour."

It was indeed a scene of desolation. A large vaulted room, the beams of which, combined like those of Westminster-Hall, were rudely carved at the extremities, remained nearly in the situation in which it had been left after the entertainment at Allan Lord Ravenswood's funeral. Overturned pitchers, and black jacks, and pewter stoups, and flagons, still cumbered the large oaken table; glasses, those more perishable implements of conviviality, many of which had been voluntarily sacrificed by the guests in their enthusiastic pledges to favourite toasts, strewed the stone floor with their fragments. As for the articles of plate, lent for the purpose by friends and kinsfolks, those had been carefully withdrawn so soon as the ostentatious display of festivity, equally unnecessary and strangely timed, had been made and ended. Nothing, in short, remained that indicated wealth; all the signs were those of recent wastefulness, and present desolation. The black cloth hangings, which, on the late mournful occasion, replaced the tattered moth-eaten tapestries, had been partly pulled down, and, dangling from the wall in irregular festoons, disclosed the rough stone-work of the building, unsmoothed either by plaster or hewn stone. The seats thrown down, or left in disorder, intimated the careless confusion which had concluded the mournful revel. „This room,”

said Ravenswood, holding up the lamp — „this room, Mr Hayston, was riotous when it should have been sad; it is a just retribution that it should now be sad when it ought to be cheerful.”

They left this disconsolate apartment, and went up stairs, where, after opening one or two doors in vain, Ravenswood led the way into a little matted anti-room, in which, to their great joy, they found a tolerably good fire, which Mysie, by some such expedient as Caleb had suggested, had supplied with a reasonable quantity of fuel. Glad at the heart to see more of comfort than the castle had yet seemed to offer, Bucklaw rubbed his hands heartily over the fire, and now listened with more complacence to the apologies which the Master of Ravenswood offered. „Comfort,” he says, „I cannot provide for you, for I have it not for myself; it is long since these walls have known it, if, indeed, they were ever acquainted with it. Shelter and safety, I think, I can promise you.”

„Excellent matters, Master,” replied Bucklaw, „and, with a mouthful of food and wine, positively all I can require to night.”

„I fear,” said the Master, „your supper will be a poor one; I hear the matter in discussion betwixt Caleb and Mysie. Poor Balderston is something deaf, amongst his other accomplishments, so that much of what he means should

be spoken aside is overheard by the whole audience, and especially by those from whom he is most anxious to conceal his private manœuvres — Hark !”

They listened, and heard the old domestic's voice in conversation with Mysie to the following effect. „Just mak the best o't, mak the best o't, woman; it's easy to put a fair face on ony thing.”

„But the auld brood-hen ? — she'll be as teugh as bow-strings and bend-leather.”

„Say ye made a mistake — say ye made a mistake, Mysie,” replied the faithful seneschal, in a soothing and undertoned voice; „tak it a' on yoursel; never let the credit o' the house suffer.”

„But the brood-hen,” remonstrated Mysie, — „ou, she's sitting some gate aneath the dais in the hall, and I am feared to gae in in the dark for the bogle; and if I didna see the bogle, I could as ill see the hen, for it's pit-mirk, and there's no another light in the house, save that very blessed lamp whilk the Master has in his ain hand. And if I had the hen, she's to pu', and to draw, and to dress; how can I do that, and them sitting by the only fire we have?”

„Weel, weel, Mysie,” said the butler, „bide ye there a wee, and I'll try to get the lamp wiled away frae them.”

Accordingly, Caleb Balderston entered the apartment, little aware that so much of his by-play had been audible there. „Well, Caleb, my old friend, is there any chance of supper?” said the Master of Ravenswood.

„Chance of supper, your lordship?” said Caleb, with an emphasis of strong scorn at the implied doubt, — „How should there be any question of that, and we in your lordship’s house? — Chance of supper, indeed! — But ye’ll no be for butcher-meat? There’s walth o’ fat poultry, ready either for spit or brander — The fat capon, Mysie,” he added, calling out as boldly as if such a thing had been in existence.

„Quite unnecessary,” said Bucklaw, who deemed himself bound in courtesy to relieve some part of the anxious Butler’s perplexity, „if you have any thing cold, or a morsel of bread.”

„The best of bannocks!” exclaimed Caleb, much relieved; „and, for cauld meat, a’ that we hae is cauld aneugh, — howbeit maist of the cauld meat and pastry was gi’en to the poor folk after the ceremony of interment, as gude reason was; nevertheless” —

„Come, Caleb,” said the Master of Ravenswood, „I must cut this matter short. This is the young laird of Bucklaw; he is under hiding, and therefore you know” —

„He’ll be nae nicer than your lordship’s hon-

our, I'se warrant," answered Caleb, chearfully, with a nod of intelligence; „I am sorry that the gentleman is under distress, but I am blyth that he canna say muckle again our house-keeping, for I believe his ain pinches may match ours; — no that we are pinched, thank God," he added, retracting the admission which he had made in his first burst of joy, „but nae doubt we are waur aff than we hae been, or suld be. And for eating, — what signifies telling a lie? there's just the hinder end of the mutton-ham that has been but three times on the table, and the nearer the bane the sweeter, as your honours weel ken; and — there's the heel of the ewe-milk kebbuck, w'i a bit of nice butter, and — and — and that's a' that's to trust to." And with great alacrity he produced his slender stock of provisions, and placed them with much formality upon a small round table betwixt the two gentlemen, who were not deterred either by the homely quality or limited quantity of the repast from doing it full justice. Caleb in the mean-while waited on them with grave officiousness, as if anxious to make up, by his own respectful assiduity, for the want of all other attendance.

But alas! how little on such occasions can form, however anxiously and scrupulously observed, supply the lack of substantial fare! Bucklaw, who had eagerly eat a considerable portion

of the thrice sacked mutton-ham, now began to demand ale.

"I wadna just presume to recommend our ale," said Caleb; "the maut was ill made, and there was awfu' thunner last week; but siccan water as the Tower well has, ye'll seldom see, Bucklaw, and that I'se engage for."

"But if your ale is bad you can let us have some wine," said Bucklaw, making a grimace at the mention of the pure element which Caleb so earnestly recommended.

"Wine?" answered Caleb undauntedly, "eneugh of wine; it was but twa days syne — waes me for the cause — there was as much wine drunk in this house as would have floated a pinnacle. There never was lack of wine at Wolf's Crag."

"Do fetch us some then," said his master, "instead of talking about it." And Caleb boldly departed.

Every expended butt in the old cellar did he set atilt and shake with the desperate expectation of collecting enough of the grounds of claret to fill the large pewter measure which he carried in his hand. Alas! each had been too devoutly drained; and, with all the squeezing and manœuvring which his craft as a butler suggested, he could only collect about half a quart that seemed presentable. Still, however, Caleb was too good a general to renounce the field without

a stratagem to cover his retreat. He undauntedly threw down an empty flagon, as if he had stumbled at the entrance of the apartment; called upon Mysie to wipe up the wine that had never been spilt, and placing the other vessel on the table, hoped there was still enough left for their honours. There was indeed; for even Bucklaw, a sworn friend to the grape, found no encouragement to renew his first attack upon the vintage of Wolf's Crag, but contented himself, however reluctantly, with a draught of fair water. Arrangements were now made for his repose; and as the secret chamber was assigned for this purpose, it furnished Caleb with a first-rate and most plausible apology for all deficiencies of furniture, bedding, etc.

"For wha," said he, "would have thought of the secret chaumer being needed? it has not been used since the time of the Gowrie Conspiracy, and I durst never let a woman ken of the entrance to it, or your honour will allow that it wad not hae been a secret chaumer lang."

CHAPTER VIII.

*The hearth in hall was black and dead,
No board was dight in bower within,
Nor merry bowl nor welcome bed;
"Here's sorry cheer," quoth the Heir of Linne.*

Old Ballad.

THE feelings of the prodigal Heir of Linne, as expressed in that excellent old song, when, after dissipating his whole fortune, he found himself the deserted inhabitant of "the lonely lodge," might perhaps have some resemblance to those of the Master of Ravenswood in his deserted mansion Wolf's Crag. The Master, however, had this advantage over the spendthrift in the legend, that if he was in similar distress, he could not impute it to his own imprudence. His misery had been bequeathed to him by his father, and, joined to his high blood, and to a title

which the courteous might give, or the churlish withhold at their pleasure, it was the whole inheritance he had derived from his ancestry.

Perhaps this melancholy, yet consolatory reflection, crossed the mind of this unfortunate young nobleman with a breathing of comfort. Favourable to calm reflection, as well as to the Muses, the morning, while it dispelled the shades of night, had a composing and sedative effect upon the stormy passions by which the Master of Ravenswood had been agitated on the preceding day. He now felt himself able to analyze the different feelings by which he was agitated, and much resolved to combat and to subdue them. The morning, which had arisen calm and bright, gave a pleasant effect even to the waste moorland view which was seen from the castle on looking to the landward; and the glorious ocean, crisped with a thousand rippling waves of silver, extended on the other side in awful yet complacent majesty to the verge of the horizon. With such scenes of calm sublimity the human heart sympathizes even in its most disturbed moods, and deeds of honour and virtue are inspired by their majestic influence.

To seek out Bucklaw in the retreat which he had afforded him was the first occupation of the Master, after he had performed, with a scrutiny

unusually severe, the important task of self examination. «How now, Bucklaw?» was his morning's salutation — «how like you the couch in which the exiled Earl of Angus once slept in security, when he was pursued by the full energy of a king's resentment?»

«Umph!» returned the sleeper awakened; «I have little to complain of where so great a man was quartered before me, only the mattress was of the hardest, the vault somewhat damp, the rats rather more mutinous than I would have expected from the state of Caleb's larder; and if there were shutters to that grated window, or a curtain to the bed, I should think it, upon the whole, an improvement in your accommodations.»

«It is, to be sure, forlorn enough,» said the Master, looking around the small vault; «but if you will rise and leave it, Caleb will endeavour to find you a better breakfast than your supper of last night.»

«Pray, let it be no better,» said Bucklaw, getting up and endeavouring to dress himself as well as the obscurity of the place would permit, — «let it, I say, be no better, if you mean me to persevere in my proposed reformation. The very recollection of Caleb's beverage has done more to suppress my longing to open the day with a morning-draught than twenty sermons would

have done. And you, Master? — have you been able to give battle valiantly to your bosom-snake? You see I am in the way of smothering my vipers one by one."

"I have commenced the battle, at least, Bucklaw, and I have had a fair vision of an angel who descended to my assistance," replied the Master.

"Woes me!" said his guest, "no vision can I expect, unless my aunt, Lady Girnington, should betake herself to the tomb; and then it would be the substance of her heritage rather than the appearance of her phantom that I should consider as the support of my good resolutions. — But this same breakfast, Master, — does the deer that is to make the pasty run yet on foot, as the ballad has it?"

"I will enquire into that matter," said his entertainer; and, leaving the apartment, he went in search of Caleb, whom, after some difficulty, he found in an obscure sort of dungeon, which had been in former times the buttery of the castle. Here the old man was employed busily in the doubtful task of burnishing a pewter flagon until it should take the hue and semblance of silver-plate. "I think it may do — I think it might pass, if they winna bring it ower muckle in the light o' the window;" were the ejaculations which

he muttered from time to time as if to encourage himself in his undertaking, when he was interrupted by the voice of his master. "Take this," said the Master of Ravenswood, "and get what is necessary for the family." And with these words he gave to the old butler the purse which had on the preceding evening so narrowly escaped the fangs of Craigengelt. The old man shook his silvery and thin locks, and looked with an expression of the most heartfelt anguish at his master as he weighed in his hand the slender treasure, and said in a sorrowful voice, "And is this a' that's left?"

"All that is left at present," said the Master, affecting more cheerfulness than perhaps he really felt, "is just the green purse and the wee pickle gowd, as the old song says; but we shall do better one day, Caleb."

"Before that day comes," said Caleb, "I doubt there will be an end of an auld sang, and an auld serving-man to boot. But it disna become me to speak that gate to your honour, and you looking sae pale. Tak back the purse, and keep it to be making a shew before company; for if your honour would just tak a bidding, and be whiles taking it out afore folk and putting it up again, there's naebody would refuse us trust, for a' that's come and gane yet."

“But, Caleb,” said the Master, “I still intend to leave this country very soon, and desire to do so with the reputation of an honest man, leaving no debt behind me, at least of my own contracting.”

“And gude right ye suld gang away as a true man, and so ye shall; for auld Caleb can tak the wyte of whatever is ta’en on for the house, and then it will be a’ just ae man’s burden; and I will live just as weel in the tolbooth as out of it, and the credit of the family will be a’ safe and sound.”

The Master endeavoured, in vain, to make Caleb comprehend, that the butler’s incurring the responsibility of debts in his own person would rather add to than remove the objections which he had to their being contracted. He spoke to a premier, too busy in devising ways and means to puzzle himself with refuting the arguments offered against their justice or expediency.

“There’s Eppie Smatrash will trust us for ale,” said Caleb to himself; “she has lived a’ her life under the family — and maybe wi’ a soup brandy — I canna say for wine — she is but a lone woman, and gets her claret by a runlet at a time — but I’ll work a wee drap out o’ her by fair means or foul. For doos, there’s the doo-”

cot — there will be poultry amang the tenants, though Luckie Chirnside says she has paid the kain twice ower — We'll mak shift, an it like your honour — we'll mak shift — keep your heart abune, for the house sall haud its credit as lang as auld Caleb is to the fore."

The entertainment which Caleb's exertions of various kinds enabled him to present to the young gentlemen for three or four days was certainly of no splendid description, but it may readily be believed it was set before no critical guests; and even the distresses, excuses, evasions, and shifts of Caleb, afforded amusement to the young men, and added a sort of interest to the scrambling and irregular style of their table. They had indeed occasion to seize on every circumstance that might serve to diversify or enliven time, which otherwise past away so heavily.

Bucklaw, shut out from his usual fieldsports and joyous carouses by the necessity of remaining concealed within the walls of the castle, became a joyless and uninteresting companion. When the Master of Ravenswood would no longer fence or play at shovel-board — when he himself had polished to the extremity the coat of his palfrey with brush, curry comb, and hair-cloth — when he had seen him eat his provender, and gently lie down in his stall, he could hardly

help envying the animal's apparent acquiescence in a life so monotonous. "The stupid brute," he said, "thinks neither of the race-ground or the hunting-field, or his green paddock at Bucklaw, but enjoys himself as comfortably when haltered to the rack in this ruinous vault, as if he had been foaled in it; and I, who have the freedom of a prisoner at large, to range through the dungeons of this wretched old tower, can hardly, betwixt whistling and sleeping, contrive to pass away the hour till dinner-time."

And with this disconsolate reflection he wended his way to the bartizan or battlements of the tower, to watch what objects might appear on the distant moor, or to pelt, with pebbles and pieces of lime, the sea-mews and cormorants which established themselves incautiously within the reach of an idle young man.

Ravenswood, with a mind incalculably deeper and more powerful than that of his companion, had his own anxious subjects of reflection, which wrought for him the same unhappiness that sheer ennui and want of occupation inflicted on his companion. The first sight of Lucy Ashton had been less impressive than her image proved to be upon reflection. As the depth and violence of that revengeful passion, by which he had been actuated in seeking an interview with the father,

began to abate by degrees, he looked back on his conduct towards the daughter as harsh and unworthy towards a female of rank and beauty. Her looks of grateful acknowledgment — her words of affectionate courtesy, had been repelled with something which approached to disdain; and if the Master of Ravenswood had sustained wrongs at the hand of Sir William Ashton, his conscience told him they had been unhandsomely resented towards his daughter. When his thoughts took this turn of self-reproach, the recollection of Lucy Ashton's beautiful features, rendered yet more interesting by the circumstances in which their meeting had taken place, made an impression upon his mind at once soothing and painful. The sweetness of her voice, the delicacy of her expressions, the vivid glow of her filial affection, embittered his regret at having repulsed her gratitude with rudeness, while, at the same time, they placed before his imagination a picture of the most seducing sweetness.

Even young Ravenswood's strength of moral feeling and rectitude of purpose at once increased the danger of cherishing these recollections, and the propensity to entertain them. Firmly resolved as he was to subdue, if possible, the predominating vice in his character, he admitted with willingness — nay, he summoned up in

his imagination, the ideas by which it could be most powerfully counteracted; and, while he did so, a sense of his own harsh conduct towards her naturally induced him, as if by way of recompense, to invest her with more of grace and beauty than perhaps she could actually claim.

Had any one at this period told the Master of Ravenswood that he had so lately vowed vengeance against the whole lineage of him whom he considered, not unjustly, as author of his father's ruin and death, he might at first have repelled the charge as a foul calumny; yet, upon serious self-examination, he would have been compelled to admit, that it had, at one period, some foundation in truth, though, according to the present tone of his sentiments, it was difficult to believe that this had really been the case.

There already existed in his bosom two contradictory passions, — a desire to revenge the death of his father, strangely qualified by admiration of his enemy's daughter. Against the former feeling he had struggled, until it seemed to him upon the wane; against the latter he used no means of resistance, for he did not suspect its existence. That this was actually the case, was chiefly evinced by his resuming his resolution to leave Scotland. Yet, though such was his purpose, he remained day after day at Wolf's

Crag, without taking measures for carrying it into execution. It is true, that he had written to one or two kinsmen, who resided in a distant quarter of Scotland, and particularly to the Marquis of A——, intimating his purpose; and when pressed upon the subject by Bucklaw, he was wont to allege the necessity of waiting for their reply, especially that of the Marquis, before taking so decisive a measure.

The Marquis was rich and powerful; and although he was suspected to entertain sentiments unfavourable to the government established at the Revolution, he had nevertheless address enough to head a party in the Scottish Privy Council, connected with the high church faction in England, and powerful enough to menace those to whom the Lord Keeper adhered, with a probable subversion of their power. The consulting with a personage of such importance was a plausible excuse, which Ravenswood used to Bucklaw, and probably to himself, for continuing his residence at Wolf's Crag; and it was rendered yet more so by a general report which began to be current, of a probable change of ministers and measures in the Scottish administration. These rumours, strongly asserted by some, and as resolutely denied by others, as their wishes or interest dictated, found their way even into the

ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, chiefly through the medium of Caleb the butler, who, among his other excellencies, was an ardent politician, and seldom made an excursion from the old fortress to the neighbouring village of Wolf'shope, without bringing back what tidings were current in the vicinity.

But if Bucklaw could not offer any satisfactory objections to the delay of the Master in leaving Scotland, he did not the less suffer with impatience the state of inaction to which it confined him, and it was only the ascendancy which his new companion had acquired over him, that induced him to submit to a course of life so alien to his habits and inclinations.

"You were wont to be thought a stirring active young fellow, Master," was his frequent remonstrance; "yet here you seem determined to live on and on like a rat in a hole, with this trifling difference, that the wiser vermin chuses a hermitage where he can find foot at least; but as for us, Caleb's excuses become longer as his diet turns more spare, and I fear we shall realize the stories they tell of the sloth, — we have almost eat up the last green leaf on the plant, and have nothing left for it but to drop from the tree and break our necks."

“Do not fear it,” said Ravenswood; “there is a fate watches for us, and we too have a stake in the revolution that is now impending, and which already has alarmed many a bosom.”

“What fate — what revolution?” answered his companion. “We have had one revolution too much already, I think.”

Ravenswood interrupted him by putting into his hands a letter.

“O,” answered Bucklaw, “my dream’s out — I thought I heard Caleb this morning pressing some unfortunate fellow to a drink of cold water, and assuring him it was better for his stomach in the morning than ale or brandy.”

“It was my Lord of A——’s courier,” said Ravenswood, “who was doomed to experience his ostentatious hospitality, which I believe ended in sour beer and herrings — Read, and you will see the news he has brought us.”

“I will as fast as I can,” said Bucklaw; “but I am no great clerk, nor does his lordship seem to be the first of scribes.”

The reader will peruse, in a few seconds, by the aid of our friend Ballantyne’s types, what took Bucklaw a good half hour in perusal, though assisted by the Master of Ravenswood. The tenor was as follows: —

«Right Honourable our Cousin,

«Our hearty commendations premised, these come to assure you of the interest which we take in your welfare, and in your purposes towards its augmentation. If we have been less active in shewing forth our effective good will towards you than, as a loving kinsman and blood-relative, we would willingly have desired, we request that you will impute it to lack of opportunity to shew our good liking, not to any coldness of our will. Touching your resolution to travel in foreign parts, as at this time we hold the same little advisable, in respect that your ill-willers may, according to the custom of such persons, impute motives for your journey, whereof, although we know and believe you to be as clear as ourselves, yet natheless their words may find credence in places where the belief in them may much prejudice you, and which we should see with more unwillingness and displeasure than with means of remedy.

«Having thus, as becometh our kindred, given you our poor mind on the subject of your journeying forth of Scotland, we would willingly add reasons of weight, which may materially advantage you and your father's house, thereby to determine you to abide at Wolf's Crag, until this harvest season shall be passed over. But what

sayeth the proverb, *verbum sapienti*, — a word is more to him that hath wisdom than a sermon to a fool. And albeit we have written this poor scroll with our own hand, and are well assured of the fidelity of our messenger, as him that is many ways bounden to us, yet so it is, that sliddery ways crave wary walking, and that we may not peril upon paper matters which we would gladly impart to you by word of mouth. Wherefore, it was our purpose to have prayed you heartily to come to this our barren highland country to kill a stag, and to treat of the matters which we are now more painfully inditing to you anent. But commodity does not serve a present for such our meeting, which, therefore, shall be deferred until sic time as we may in all mirth rehearse those things whereof we now keep silence. Meantime, we pray you to think that we are, and will still be your good kinsman and well-wisher, waiting but for times of whilk we do, as it were, entertain a twilight prospect, and appear and hope to be also your effectual well-doer. And in which hope we heartily write ourself,

Right honourable,
Your loving cousin,

A——.“

Given from our poor
house of B——, etc.

Superscribed — «For the right honourable, and our honoured kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood — These, with haste, haste, post-haste — ride and run until these be delivered.»

«What think you of this epistle, Bucklaw?» said the Master, when his companion had hammered out all the sense, and almost all the words of which it consisted.

«Truly that the Marquis's meaning is as great a riddle as his manuscript. He is really in much need of Wit's Interpreter, or the Complete Letter-Writer, and were I you I would send him a copy by the bearer. He writes you very kindly to remain wasting your time and your money in this vile, stupid, oppressed country, without so much as offering you the countenance and shelter of his house. In my opinion, he has some scheme in view in which he supposes you can be useful, and he wishes to keep you at hand, to make use of you when it ripens, reserving the power of turning you adrift, should his plot fail in the concoction.»

«His plot? — then you suppose it is a treasonable business,» answered Ravenswood.

«What else can it be?» replied Bucklaw; «the Marquis has been long suspected to have an eye to Saint Germain's.»

“He should not engage me rashly in such an adventure,” said Ravenswood; “when I recollect the times of the first and second Charles, and of the last James, truly, I see little reason, that, as a man or patriot, I should draw my sword for their descendants.”

“Humph!” replied Bucklaw; “so you are set yourself down to mourn over the crop-eared dogs, whom honest Claverse treated as they deserved.”

“They first gave the dogs an ill name, and then hanged them,” replied Ravenswood. “I hope to see the day when justice shall be open to Whig and Tory, and when these nick-names shall only be used among coffee-house politicians, as slut and jade are among apple-women, as cant terms of idle spite and rancour.”

“That will not be in our days, Master — the iron has entered too deeply into our sides and our souls.”

“It will be, however, one day,” replied the Master; “men will not always start at these nick-names as at a trumpet-sound. As social life is better protected, its comforts will become too dear to be hazarded without some better reason than speculative politics.”

“It is fine talking,” answered Bucklaw; “but my heart is with the old song, —

«To see good corn upon the rigs,
And a gallows built to hang the Whigs,
And the right restored where the right should be,
O that is the thing that would wanton me.”

«You may sing as loudly as you will, *cantabit vacuus*,” — answered the Master; «but I believe the Marquis is too wise — at least too wary, to join you in such a burthen. I suspect he alludes to a revolution in the Scottish Privy-council, rather than in the British kingdoms.”

«O, confusion to your state-tricks,” exclaimed Bucklaw, „your cold calculating manœuvres, which old gentlemen in wrought night-caps and furred gowns execute like so many games at chess, and displace a treasurer or lord commissioner as they would take a rook or a pawn. Tennis for my sport, and battle for my earnest. My racket and my sword for my play-thing and bread-winner. And you, Master, so deep and considerate as you would seem, you have that within you makes the blood boil faster than suits your present humour of moralizing on political truths. You are one of those wise men who see every thing with great composure till their blood is up, and then — woe to any one who should put them in mind of their own prudential maxims.”

“Perhap’s,” said Ravenswood, “you read me more rightly than I can myself. But to think justly will certainly go some length in helping me to act so. But hark! I hear Caleb tolling the dinner-bell.”

“Which he always does with the more sonorous grace, in proportion to the meagreness of the cheer which he has provided,” said Bucklaw, “as if that infernal clang and jangle, which will one day bring the old belfry down the cliff, could convert a starved hen into a fat capon, and a blade-bone of mutton into a haunch of venison.”

“I wish we may be so well off as your worst conjectures surmize, Bucklaw, from the extreme solemnity and ceremony with which Caleb seems to place on the table that solitary covered dish.”

“Uncover, Caleb! uncover, for Heaven’s sake!” said Bucklaw; “let us have what you can give us without preface — why it stands well enough, man,” he continued, addressing impatiently the ancient butler, who, without reply, kept shifting the dish, until he had at length placed it with mathematical precision in the very midst of the table.

“What have we got here, Caleb?” enquired the Master in his turn.

“Ahem! sir, ye suld have known before; but his honour the Laird of Bucklaw is so impatient,” answered Caleb, still holding the dish with one hand, and the cover with the other, with evident reluctance to disclose the contents.

“But what is it, a God’s name — not a pair of clean spurs, I hope, in the Border fashion of old times?”

“Ahem! ahem!” reiterated Caleb, “your honour is pleased to be facetious — natheless I might presume to say it was a convenient fashion, and used, as I haveh eard, in an honourable and thriving family. But touching your present dinner, I judged that this being Saint Magdalen’s Eve, who was a worthy queen of Scotland in her day, your honours might judge it decorous, if not altogether to fast, yet only to sustain nature with some slight reflection, as ane saulted herring or the like.” And uncovering the dish, he displayed four of the savoury fishes which he mentioned, adding, in a subdued tone, “that they were no just common herring neither, being every ane melters, and sauted with uncommon care by the house-

keeper (poor Mysie) for his honour's especial use."

"Out upon all apologies," said the Master, "let us eat the herrings since there is nothing better to be had — but I begin to think with you, Bucklaw, that we are consuming the last green leaf, and that, in spite of the Marquis's political machinations, we must positively shift camp for want of forage, without waiting the issue of them."



CHAPTER IX.

*Aye, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
And from its covert starts the fearful prey,
Who, warm'd with youths blood in his swelling veins,*

*Would like a lifeless clod outstretched lie,
Shut out from all the fair creation offers?*

Ethwald, Act I. Scene I.

LIGHT meals procure light slumbers; and therefore it is not surprising, that, considering the fare which Caleb's conscience, or his necessity, assuming, as will sometimes happen, that disguise, had assigned to the guests of Wolf's Crag their slumbers should have been short.

In the morning Bucklaw rushed into his host's apartment with a loud halloo, which might have awaked the dead.

«Up! up! in the name of Heaven — the hunters are out, the only piece of sport I have seen this month; and you lie here, Master, on a bed that has little to recommend it, except that it may be something softer than the stone floor of your ancestors' vault.»

«I wish,» said Ravenswood, raising his head peevishly, «you had forborne so early a jest, Mr Hayston — it is really no pleasure to lose the very short repose which I had just begun to enjoy, after a night spent in thoughts upon fortune far harder than my couch, Bucklaw.»

«Pshaw! pshaw!» replied his guest, «get up — get up — the hounds are abroad — I have saddled the horses myself, for old Caleb was calling for grooms and lacqueys, and would never have proceeded without two hour's apology, for the absence of men that were a hundred miles off — get up, Master — I say the hounds are out — get up, I say — the hunt is up.» And off ran Bucklaw.

«And I say,» said the Master, rising slowly, «that nothing can concern me less — Whose hounds come so near us?»

«The Honourable Lord Bittlebrain's,» answered Caleb, who had followed the impatient Laird of Bucklaw into his master's bed-room, «and truly I ken nae tittle they have to be yowling and howl-

ing within the freedoms and immunities of your lordship's right of free-forestry."

"Nor I, Caleb," replied Ravenswood, "excepting that they have bought both the lands and the right of forestry, and may think themselves entitled to exercise the rights they have paid their money for."

"It may be sae, my lord," replied Caleb; "but its no gentleman's deed of them to come here and exercise such like right, and your lordship living at your ain castle of Wolf's Crag. Lord Bittlebrain would do weel to remember what his folks have been."

"And we what we now are," said the Master, with suppressed bitterness of feeling. "But reach me my cloak, Caleb, and I will indulge Bucklaw with a sight of this chase. It is selfish to sacrifice my guest's pleasure to my own."

"Sacrifice?" echoed Caleb, in a tone which seemed to imply the total absurdity of his master making the least concession in deference to any one — "Sacrifice indeed? — but I crave your honour's pardon — and whilk doublet is it your pleasure to wear?"

"Any one you will, Caleb — my wardrobe, I suppose, is not very extensive."

“Not extensive?” echoed his assistant; “when there is the grey and silver that your lordship bestowed on Hew Hildebrand, your out-rider — and the French velvet that went with my lord your father (be gracious to him) — my lord your father’s auld wardrope to the puir friends of the family, and the drap-de-berry” —

“Which I gave to you, Caleb, and which, I suppose, is the only dress we have any chance to come at, except that I wore yesterday — pray, hand me that, and say no more about it.”

“If your honour has a fancy,” replied Caleb, “and doubtless it’s a sad-coloured suit, and you are in mourning — nevertheless I have never try’d on the drap-de-berry — ill wad it become me — and your honour having no change of claiths at this present — and it’s weel brushed, and as there are leddies down yonder” —

“Ladies?” said Ravenswood; “and what ladies?”

“What do I ken, your lordship? — looking down at them from the Warden’s Tower, I could but see them glent by wi’ their bridles ringing, and their feathers fluttering, like the court of Elfland.”

“Well, well, Caleb,” replied the Master, “help me on with my cloak, and hand me my

sword-belt. — What clatter is that in the courtyard?"

"Just Bucklaw bringing out the horses," said Caleb, after a glance through the window, "as if there werena men aneugh in the castle, or as if I couldna serve the turn of eny o' them that are out o' the gate."

"Alas! Caleb, we should want little, if your ability were equal to your will," replied his master.

"And I hope your lordship disna want that muckle," said Caleb; "for considering a' things, I trust we support the credit of the family as weel as things will permit of. Only Bucklaw is aye sae frank and sae forward, and there he has brought out your lordship's palfrey without the saddle, being decored wi' the broidered sumpter-cloth, and I could have brushed it in a minute."

"It is all very well," said his master, escaping from him, and descending the narrow and steep winding stair-case, which led to the courtyard.

"It may be a' very weel," said Caleb, somewhat peevishly; "but if your lordship wad tarry a bit, I will tell you what will *not* be very weel."

“And what is that?” said Ravenswood impatiently, but stopping at the same time.

“Why, just that ye suld speer ony gentleman hame to dinner; for I canna mak anither fast on a feast day, as when I cam ower Bucklaw wi’ Queen Margaret — and, to speak truth, if your lordship wad but please to cast yoursell in the way of dining wi’ Lord Bittlebrains, I’s warrand I wad cast about brawly for the morn; or if, stead o’ that, ye wad but dine wi’ them at the Change-house, ye might mak your shift for the lawing; ye might say ye had forgot your purse — or that the carline awed you rent, and that ye wad allow it in the settlement.”

“Or any other lie that came uppermost, I suppose,” said his master. “Good bye, Caleb; I commend your care for the honour of the family.” And, throwing himself on his horse, he followed Bucklaw, who, at the manifest risk of his neck, had begun to gallop down the steep path which led to the Tower, as soon as he saw Ravenswood have his foot in the stirrup.

Caleb Balderstone looked anxiously after them, and shook his thin grey locks — “And I trust they will come to no evil — but they have reached the plain, and folks cannot say but that the horse are hearty and in spirits.”

Animated by the natural impetuosity and fire of his temper, young Bucklaw rushed on with the careless speed of a whirlwind. Ravenswood was scarce more moderate in his pace, for his was a mind unwillingly roused from contemplative inactivity, but which, when once put into motion, acquired a spirit of forcible and violent progression. Neither was his eagerness proportioned in all cases to the motive of impulse, but might be compared to the speed of a stone, which rushes with like fury down the hill, whether it was first put in motion by the arm of a giant or the hand of a boy. He felt, therefore, in no ordinary degree, the headlong impulse of the chase, a pastime so natural to youth of all ranks, that it seems rather to be an inherent passion in our animal nature, which levels all differences of rank and education, than an acquired habit of rapid exercise.

The repeated bursts of the French horn, which were then always used for the encouragement and direction of the hounds — the deep, though distant baying of the pack — the half-heard cries of the huntsmen — the half-seen forms which were discovered now emerging from glens which crossed the moor, now sweeping over its surface, now picking their way where it was impeded by morasses, and, above all, the feeling of his own rapid motion, animated the Master of Ravenswood, at least for the moment, above the re-

collections of a more painful nature by which he was surrounded. The first thing which recalled him to those unpleasing circumstances was feeling that his horse, notwithstanding all the advantages which he received from his rider's knowledge of the country, was unable to keep up with the chace. As he drew his bridle up with the bitter feeling that his poverty excluded him from the favourite recreation of his forefathers, and indeed their sole employment when not engaged in military pursuits, he was accosted by a well-mounted stranger, who, unobserved, had kept near him during the earlier part of his career.

“Your horse is blown,” said the man, with a complaisance seldom used in a hunting-field; “Might I crave your honour to make use of mine?”

“Sir,” said Ravenswood, more surprised than pleased at such a proposal, “I really do not know how I have merited such a favour at a stranger's hands.”

“Never ask a question about it, Master,” said Bucklaw, who, with great unwillingness, had hitherto reined in his own gallant steed, not to outride his host and entertainer. “Take the goods the gods provide you, as the great John Dryden says — or stay — here, my friend, lend me that horse; I see you have been puzzled to rein him up this

half hour. I'll take the devil out of him for you. — Now, Master, do you ride mine, which will carry you like an eagle."

And throwing the rein of his own horse to the Master of Ravenswood, he sprung upon that which the stranger resigned to him, and continued his career at full speed.

"Was ever so thoughtless a being," said the Master; "and you, my friend, how could you trust him with your horse?"

"The horse," said the man, "belongs to a person who will make your honour, or any of your honourable friends, most welcome to him, flesh and fell."

"And the owner's name is —— ?" asked Ravenswood.

"Your honour must excuse me, you will learn that from himself — if you please to take your friend's horse, and leave me your galloway, I will meet you after the fall of the stag, for I hear they are blowing him at bay."

"I believe, my friend, it will be the best way to recover your good horse for you," answered Ravenswood; and mounting the nag of his friend Bucklaw, he made all the haste in his power to

the spot where the blast of the horn announced that the stag's career was nearly terminated.

These jovial shouts were intermixed with the huntsmen's shouts of «Hyke a Talbot! Hyke a Teviot! now, boys, now!» and similar cheering halloos of the olden hunting field, to which the impatient yelling of the hounds, now close on the object of their pursuit, gave a lively and unremitting chorus. The straggling riders began now to rally towards the scene of action, collecting from different points as to a common centre.

Bucklaw kept the start which he had gotten, and arrived first at the spot, where the stag, incapable of sustaining a more prolonged flight, had turned upon the hounds, and, in the hunter's phrase, was at bay. With his stately head bent down, his sides white with foam, his eyes strained betwixt rage and terror, the hunted animal had now in his turn become an object of intimidation to his pursuers. The hunters came up one by one, and watched an opportunity to assail him with some advantage, which, in such circumstances, can only be done with caution. The dogs stood aloof and bayed loudly, intimating at once eagerness and fear, and each of the sportsmen seemed to expect that his comrade would take upon him the perilous task of assaulting and disabling the

animal. The ground, which was a hollow in the common or moor, afforded little advantage for approaching the stag unobserved, and general was the shout of triumph when Bucklaw, with the dexterity proper to an accomplished cavalier of the day, sprang from his horse, and dashing suddenly and swiftly at the stag, brought him to the ground by a cut on the hind leg, with his short hunting sword. The pack rushing in upon their disabled enemy, soon ended his painful struggles, and solemnized his fall with their clamour — the hunters with their horns and voices whooping and blowing a *mort*, or death-note, which resounded far over the billows of the adjacent ocean.

The huntsman then withdrew the hounds from the throttled stag, and on his knee presented his knife to a fair female form, on a white palfrey, whose terror, or perhaps her compassion, had till then kept her at some distance. She wore a black silk riding mask, which was then a common fashion, as well for preserving the complexion from sun and rain, as from an idea of decorum, which did not permit a lady to appear bare-faced while engaged in a boisterous sport, and attended by a promiscuous company. The richness of her dress, however, as well as the mettle and form of her palfrey, together with the sylvan compliment paid to her by the huntsman, pointed

her out to Bucklaw as the principal person in the field. It was not without a feeling of pity, approaching even to contempt, that this enthusiastic hunter observed her refuse the huntsman's knife, presented to her for the purpose of making the first incision in the stag's breast, and thereby discovering the quality of the venison. He felt more than half inclined to pay his compliments to her; but it had been Bucklaw's misfortune, that his habits of life had not rendered him familiarly acquainted with the higher and better classes of female society, so that, with all his natural audacity, he felt sheepish and bashful when it became necessary to address a lady of distinction.

Taking unto himself heart of grace (to use his own phrase,) he did at length summon up resolution enough to give the fair huntress good time of the day, and trust that her sport had answered her expectation. Her answer was very courteously and modestly expressed, and testified some gratitude to the gallant cavalier, whose exploit had terminated the chase so adroitly, when the hounds and huntsmen seemed somewhat at a stand.

“Uds daggers and scabbard, madam,” said Bucklaw, whom this observation brought at once upon his own ground, “there is no difficulty or merit in that matter at all, so that a fellow is

not too much afraid of having a pair of antlers in his guts. I have hunted at force five hundred times, madam; and I never yet saw the stag at bay, by land or water, but I durst have gone roundly in on him. It is all use and wont, madam; and I'll tell you, madam, for all that, it must be done with good heed and caution; and you will do well, madam, to have your hunting-sword both right sharp and double-edged, that you may strike either fore-handed or backhanded, as you see reason, for a hurt with a buck's horn is a perilous and somewhat venomous matter."

"I am afraid, sir," said the young lady, and her smile was scarce concealed by her vizard, "I shall have little use for such careful preparation."

"But the gentleman says very right for all that, my lady that," said an old huntsman, who had listened to Bucklaw's harangue with no small edification; "and I have heard my father say, who was a forester at the Cabrach, that a wild-boar's gaunch is more easily healed than a hurt from the deer's-horn, for so says the old woodsman's rhyme,

"If thou be hurt with horn of hart, it brings
thee to thy bier;

But tusk of boar shall leeches — heal — thereof
have lesser fear."

“An I might advise,” continued Bucklaw, who was now in his element, and desirous of assuming the whole management, “as the hounds are surbated and weary, the head of the stag should be cabaged in order to reward them; and if I may presume to speak, the huntsman, who is to break up the stag, ought to drink to your good ladyship’s health a good lusty bicker of ale, or a tass of brandy; for if he breaks him up without drinking, the venison will not keep well.”

This very agreeable prescription received, as will be readily believed, all acceptation from the huntsman, who in requital offered to Bucklaw the compliment of his knife, which the young lady had declined. This polite proffer was seconded by his mistress.

“I believe, sir,” said she, withdrawing herself from the circle, “that my father, for whose amusement Lord Bittlebrain’s hounds have been out to-day, will readily surrender all care of these matters to a gentleman of your experience.”

Then, bending gracefully from her horse, she wished him good morning; and attended by one or two domestics, who seemed immediately attached to her service, retired from the scene of action, to which Bucklaw, too much delighted with an opportunity of displaying his wood-craft

to care about man or woman either, paid little attention; but was soon stript to his doublet, with tucked-up sleeves, and naked arms up to the elbows in blood and grease, slashing, cutting, hacking, and hewing, with the precision of Sir Tristrem himself, and wrangling and disputing with all around him concerning nombles, briskets, flankards, and ravenbones, then usual terms of the art of hunting, or of butchery, whichever the reader chuses to call it, which are now probably antiquated.

When Ravenswood, who followed a short space behind his friend, saw that the stag had fallen, his temporary ardour for the chace gave way to that feeling of reluctance which he felt, at encountering in his fallen fortunes the gaze whether of equals or inferiors. He reined up his horse on the top of a gentle eminence, from which he observed the busy and gay scene beneath him, and heard the whoops of the huntsmen gaily mingled with the cry of the dogs, and the neighing and trampling of the horses. But these jovial sounds fell sadly on the ear of the ruined nobleman. The chace, with all its train of excitations, has ever since feudal times been accounted the almost exclusive privilege of the aristocracy, and was anciently their chief employment in times of peace. The sense that he was excluded by his

situation from enjoying the sylvan sport, which his rank assigned to him as a special prerogative, and the feeling that new men were now exercising it over the downs, which had been jealously reserved by his ancestors for their own amusement, while he, the heir of the domain, was fain to hold himself at a distance from their party, awakened reflections calculated to depress deeply a mind like Ravenswood's, which was naturally contemplative and melancholy. His pride, however, soon shook off this feeling of dejection, and it gave way to impatience upon finding that his volatile friend Bucklaw seemed in no hurry to return with his borrowed steed, which Ravenswood, before leaving the field, wished to see restored to the obliging owner. As he was about to move towards the groupe of assembled huntsmen, he was joined by a horseman, who like himself had kept aloof during the fall of the deer.

This personage seemed stricken in years. He wore a scarlet cloak, buttoning high upon his face, and his hat was unlooped and slouched, probably by way of defence against the weather. His horse, a strong and steady palfrey, was calculated for a rider who proposed to witness the sport of the day, rather than to share it. An attendant waited at some distance, and the whole

equipment was that of an elderly gentleman of rank and fashion. He accosted Ravenswood very politely, but not without some embarrassment. "You seem a gallant young gentleman, sir," he said, "and yet appear as indifferent to this brave sport as if you had my load of years on your shoulders."

"I have followed the sport with more spirit on other occasions," replied the Master; "at present late events in my family must be my apology — and besides," he added, "I was but indifferently mounted at the beginning of the sport."

"I think," said the stranger, "one of my attendants had the sense to accommodate your friend with a horse."

"I was much indebted to his politeness and yours," replied Ravenswood. "My friend is Mr Hayston of Bucklaw, whom I dare say you will be sure to find in the thick of the keenest sportsmen. He will return your servant's horse, and take my poney in exchange — and will add," he concluded, turning his horse's head from the stranger, "his best acknowledgments to mine for the accommodation."

The Master of Ravenswood having thus expres-

sed himself, began to move homeward, with the manner of one who has taken leave of his company. But the stranger was not so to be shaken off. He turned his horse at the same time, and rode in the same direction so near to the Master, that, without out-riding him, which the formal civility of the time, and the respect due to the stranger's age and recent civility, would have rendered improper, he could not easily escape from his company.

The stranger did not long remain silent. «This then,” he said, «is the ancient Castle of Wolf's Crag, often mentioned in the Scottish records,” looking to the old tower then darkening under the influence of a stormy cloud, that formed its back ground; for at the distance of a short mile, the chace having been circuitous had brought the hunters back nearly to the point which they had attained when Ravenswood and Bucklaw set forth to join them.

Ravenswood answered this observation with a cold and distant assent.

«It was, as I have heard,” continued the stranger, unabashed by his coldness, «one of the most early possessions of the honourable family of Ravenswood.”

“Their earliest possession,” answered the Master, “and probably their latest.”

“I — I — I should hope not, sir,” answered the stranger, clearing his voice with more than one cough, and making an effort to overcome a certain degree of hesitation, — “Scotland knows what she owes to this ancient family, and remembers their frequent and honourable achievements. I have little doubt, that, were it properly represented to her majesty that so ancient and noble a family were subjected to dilapidation — I mean to decay — means might be found, *ad re-ædificandam antiquam domum*” —

“I will save you the trouble, sir, of discussing this point farther,” said the Master haughtily. “I am the heir of that unfortunate House — I am the Master of Ravenswood — and you, sir, who seem to be a gentleman of fashion and education, must be sensible, that the next mortification after being unhappy, is the being loaded with undesired commiseration.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the elder horseman — “I did not know — I am sensible I ought not to have mentioned — nothing could be farther from my thoughts than to suppose” —

“There are no apologies necessary, sir,” an-

swered Ravenswood, „for here, I suppose, our roads separate, and I assure you that we part in perfect equanimity on my side.”

As speaking these words, he directed his horse's head towards a narrow causeway, the ancient approach to Wolf's Crag, of which it might be truly said, in the words of the Bard of Hope, that

— „Frequented by few was the grass-cover'd
road,
Where the hunter of deer and the warrior
trode,
To his hills that encircle the sea.”

But ere he could disengage himself from his companion, the young lady we have already mentioned came up to join the stranger, followed by her servants.

„Daughter,” said the stranger to the masked damsel, „this is the Master of Ravenswood.”

It would have been natural that the gentleman should have replied to this introduction; but there was something in the graceful form and retiring modesty of the female to whom he was thus presented, which not only prevented him from enquiring to whom, and by whom, the

annunciation had been made, but which even for the time struck him absolutely mute. At this moment the cloud which had long lowered above the height on which Wolf's Crag is situated, and which now, as it advanced, spread itself in darker and denser folds both over land and sea, hiding the distant objects and obscuring those which were nearer, turning the sea to a leaden complexion, and the heath to a darker brown, began now, by one or two distant peals, to announce the thunders with which it was fraught; while two flashes of lightning, following each other very closely, shewed in the distance the grey turrets of Wolf's Crag, and, more nearly, the rolling billows of the sea, crested suddenly with red and dazzling light.

The horse of the fair huntress shewed symptoms of impatience and restiveness, and it became impossible for Ravenswood, as a man or a gentleman, to leave her abruptly to the care of an aged father or her menial attendants. He was, or believed himself, obliged in courtesy to take hold of her bridle, and assist her in managing the unruly animal. While he was thus engaged, the old gentleman observed that the storm seemed to increase — that they were far from Lord Bittlebrain's, whose guests they were for the present — and that he would be obliged to the Master of Ravenswood to point him the way to the near-

est place of refuge from the storm. At the same time he cast a wistful and embarrassed look towards the Tower of Wolf's Crag, which seemed to render it almost impossible for the owner to avoid offering an old man and a lady, in such an emergency, the temporary use of his house. Indeed, the condition of the young huntress rendered this courtesy indispensable; for, in the course of the services which he rendered, he could not but perceive that she trembled much, and was extremely agitated, from her apprehensions, doubtless, of the coming storm.

I know not if the Master of Ravenswood shared her terrors, but he was not entirely free from something like a similar disorder of nerves, as he observed, „The Tower of Wolf's Crag has nothing to offer beyond the shelter of its roof, but if that can be acceptable at such a moment” — he paused, as if the rest of the invitation stuck in his throat. But the old gentleman, his self-constituted companion, did not allow him to recede from the invitation, which he had rather suffered to be implied than directly expressed.

„The storm,” said the stranger, „must be an apology for waiving ceremony — his daughter's health was weak — she had suffered much from a recent alarm — he trusted their intrusion on the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality would not

be altogether unpardonable in the circumstances of the case — his child's safety must be dearer to him than ceremony."

There was no room to retreat. The Master of Ravenswood led the way, continuing to keep hold of the lady's bridle to prevent her horse from starting at some unexpected explosion of thunder. He was not so bewildered in his own hurried reflections, but what he remarked, that the deadly paleness which had occupied her neck and temples, and such of her features as the riding-mask left exposed, gave place to a deep and rosy suffusion; and he felt with embarrassment that a flush was by tacit sympathy excited in his own cheeks. The stranger, with watchfulness which he disguised under apprehensions for the safety of his daughter, continued to observe the expression of the Master's countenance as they ascended the hill to Wolf's Crag. When they stood in front of that ancient fortress, Ravenswood's emotions were of a very complicated description; and as he led the way into the rude court-yard, and halloo'd to Caleb to give attendance, there was a tone of sternness, almost of fierceness, which seemed somewhat alien from the courtesies of one who is receiving honoured guests.

Caleb came, and not the paleness of the fair

stranger at the first approach of the thunder, nor the paleness of any other person, in any other circumstances whatsoever, equalled that which overcame the thin cheeks of the disconsolate seneschal, when he beheld this accession of guests to the castle, and reflected that the dinner hour was fast approaching. „Is he daft?” he muttered to himself, — „Is he clean daft a'the-gither, to bring lords and leddies, and a host of folks behint them, and twal-o'-clock chappit?” Then approaching the Master, he craved pardon for having permitted the rest of his people to go out to see the hunt, observing, that „they wad never think of his lordship coming back till mirk night, and that he dreaded they might play the truant.”

„Silence, Balderstone!” said Ravenswood sternly; „your folly is unseasonable. — Sir and madam,” he said, turning to his guests, „this old man, and a yet older and more imbecile female domestic, form my whole retinue. Our means of refreshing you are more scanty than even so miserable a retinue, and a dwelling so dilapidated, might seem to promise you; but, such as they may chance to be, you may command them.”

The elder stranger, struck with the ruined and even savage appearance of the tower, rendered

still more disconsolate by the lowering and gloomy sky, and perhaps not altogether unmoved by the grave and determined voice in which their host addressed them, looked round him anxiously, as if he half repented the readiness with which he had accepted the offered hospitality. But there was now no opportunity of receding from the situation in which he had placed himself.

As for Caleb, he was so utterly stunned by his master's public and unqualified acknowledgment of the nakedness of the land, that for two minutes he could only mutter within his hebdomadal beard, which had not felt the razor for six days, "He's daft — clean daft — red wud, and awa' wi't! But de'il hae Caleb Balderstone," said he, collecting his powers of invention and resource, "if the family shall lose credit, if he were as mad as the seven wise masters." He then boldly advanced, and in spite of his master's frowns and impatience, gravely asked, "if he should not serve up some slight refectation for the young leddy, and a glass of tokay, or old sack — or" —

"Truce to this ill-timed foolery," said the Master, sternly — "put the horses into the stable, and interrupt us no more with your absurdities."

"Your honour's pleasure is to be obeyed aboon a' things," said Caleb; „nevertheless, as for the

sack and tokay which it is not your noble guest's pleasure to accept" —

But here the voice of Bucklaw, heard even above the clattering of hoofs and braying of horns with which it mingled, announced that he was scaling the pathway to the tower at the head of the greater part of the gallant hunting train.

"The de'il be in me," said Caleb, taking heart in spite of this new invasion of Philistines, "if they shall beat me yet. The hellicat ne'er-do-weel! — to bring such a crew here, that will expect to find brandy as plenty as ditch-water, and he kenning sae absolutely the case in whilk we stand for the present. But I trow, could I get rid of these gaping gowks of flunkies that hae won into the court-yard at the back of their betters, as mony a man gets preferment, I could make a' right yet."

The measures which he took to execute this dauntless resolution, the reader shall learn in the next chapter.

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